

HOUSING COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2019  
**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT BERTRAND**

ON:

**Proposed S.B. No. 54 AN ACT CONCERNING A LANDLORD'S ABILITY TO REVIEW CRIMINAL RECORDS RELATING TO A PROSPECTIVE TENANT.**

**Proposed H.B. No. 5713 AN ACT CONCERNING INQUIRIES ABOUT THE CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS OF A PROSPECTIVE TENANT.**

**Proposed H.B. No. 5712 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT CLEAN SLATE LAW.**

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Senator Bradley, Representative McGee, Senator Hwang, Representative Dauphinais, and members of the Housing Committee:

I have been a public housing practitioner for over 23 years. My experience includes being a Past President of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials more commonly known as CONN-NAHRO. I am currently the Executive Director of a housing authority.

CONN-NAHRO's mission is to advocate for and support public housing authorities in their efforts to provide decent, safe, and affordable housing and to preserve Connecticut's public housing stock for future generations. Our membership represents a strong group of housing professionals, housing providers, and industry partners. Our member housing authorities have the responsibility of managing or administering housing for 150,000 families and individuals in over 62,000 housing units throughout the State of Connecticut.

CONN-NAHRO's leadership understands the need to provide housing and the important part we play in reducing barriers. Our members provide housing for the most vulnerable families and individuals in our society, including individuals with a criminal history. We take great pains to screen applicants on an individualized basis and to fully account for the totality of an individual's circumstances. A housing authority's Admissions Policy will include a provision for an informal review if an applicant has been determined to not meet the criteria for housing. This process gives the applicant an opportunity to object to the decision and to present information regarding their circumstances.

Setting tight restrictions, delaying and/or eliminating access to information could potential not keep in step with our obligation to provide for the safety of all our residents, which includes the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and families with young children. Delaying the criminal background check until after an offer of housing is made will increase the time it takes to house those in need and create an administrative burden.

Please consider the above information as you deliberate this legislation.