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## Housing Committee Public Hearing – February 7, 2019

Testimony of Bob De Cosmo, President of the CT Property Owners Alliance, LLC.

### In OPPOSITION to S.B. 57, HB #'s 5712 & 5713

Honorable members of the Housing Committee, my name is Bob De Cosmo and please consider my testimony in opposition to limiting the availability of complete criminal histories when considering rental applicants.

Besides the reckless endangerment of the public's *Health, Safety and Welfare* that these proposals create, there is an unforeseen consequence that I am pretty sure that none of the proponents of these Bills has considered when discussing this concept.

I wear two hats today when preparing my testimony. Not only do I advocate for the property owner community, I am also one of the only individuals in the State that manages a consumer reporting service and we use criminal records as part of our tenant screening report.

When I spoke to several of our clients that use our screening reports, the reaction I received was disturbing...to paraphrase, "No worries, I will just go on social media and look at their Facebook postings and Twitter accounts and use the free websites out there that provide information about people to get more criminal information."

*Unverified criminal information will be used in place of factual resources* and not only will innocent people not even associated with criminal activity now be prevented from housing due to the large number of similar names and years of birth in the population, there will be no formal process to investigate any errors or disputes that legitimate tenant screening services must provide because people will rely on alternative and subjective means to screen renters for criminal activity.

I submit, instead of creating housing opportunities, these proposals will limit them for the population you are seeking to help. These proposals will surely backfire. Additionally, are you going to eliminate the State's Judicial website that makes this information available to the public?

In April of 2016 HUD issued guidelines on how to use criminal records in tenant screening, leave it as such. The public should not be endangered in a place they call "Home." Property owners must protect their occupants, employees and themselves, these proposals put people at risk.

Sincerely,

Bob De Cosmo  
President CT – Property Owners Alliance LLC