

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7225

AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PUBLIC

Title: HOUSING.

Vote Date: 3/7/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/5/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Housing Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would allow housing authorities to implement a hybrid waiting list management system in order to streamline the application process.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language clarifies the definition of “controlling participant” as an individual or entity that exercises day-to-day financial or operation control, and “project-based housing provider” as a property owner who contracts with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide housing to tenants under the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The substitute language also clarifies cases of project-based housing provider to state that such information has to include identifying information of an individual who exercises day-to-day control of that corporation.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Shanté Hanks, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Housing; opposes this bill, stating that in consultation with the Fair Housing Enforcement Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, a redrafting of the Connecticut Fair Housing Regulations is being worked on in which, first-come first served would be eliminated. It was shared that, first-come first served would contribute to and exacerbate segregation in rural and suburban communities, as it would inhibit access to units in these areas by individuals and families who do not live or work in proximity to such units.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Scott C. Bertrand, Executive Director, Enfield Housing Authority, supports this bill, stating that this would enable housing authorities to better serve those in need of housing and would give housing authorities the ability to add individuals to lists after the initial drawing and under this new system applicants, particularly with a disability will be able to access applications without going to a central location making it easy for applicants to apply. It was noted that this legislation would conform to the standard approach for HUD housing programs and the guidance issued by the Regional Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

Carol J. Martin, Executive Director, Fairfield/Westport Housing Authority, supports this bill, stating it would create more flexibility for housing authorities which would reduce administrative costs as well as provide more balanced access for applicants and keeping lists open to better assist housing authorities when demand for units are low.

Elizabeth Sulik, Executive Director, Stratford Housing Authority, supports this bill, stating it will better serve applicants, especially those with disabilities by allowing applicants to be added to the waitlist on an ongoing basis.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Kathleen Flaherty, Executive Director, Connecticut Legal Right Project, opposes this bill, stating that HUD notes the use of lottery or other random choice techniques is more efficient when housing demands exceed availability. It was expressed that there are concerns with administering the open wait list and make new rules unclear for tenants applying for housing. It is stated that it would have a negative impact on people with disabilities who are unable to wait in a line, lack access to transportation or lack access to reliable internet to apply online.

Erin Kemple, Executive Director, Connecticut Fair Housing Center, opposes this bill, stating that first-come first serve violates state and federal housing laws making applying more difficult for people with disabilities. It was noted that state and federal law requires public and subsidized housing providers to make every effort to ensure people least likely to apply are given opportunity to apply for and live in public housing.

Reported by: Eileen Bronko

Date: 3/12/19