

Testimony in favor of:
HB-6529 An Act Concerning Housing Authorities and Establishing an Office of the Housing Advocate

Senator Lopes, Representative McGee, and distinguished members of the Housing Committee: My name is Donna Grossman, and I am from Windsor. I am writing to you in support of HB-6529, an act concerning housing authorities and establishing an office of housing.

Six months ago, I honestly would not have been paying attention to a bill regarding housing authorities. But that was before I realized what can happen when we aren't paying attention to housing authorities.

In Windsor, as I suspect in most towns, the Housing Authority is staffed by volunteer commissioners. Expertise in housing issues is not a requirement for the position. Over a year ago, residents at one of Windsor public housing developments began complaining about conditions there. This development houses the elderly and the disabled, our community's most vulnerable citizens. The complaints were ignored. These complaints finally bubbled to the surface following the submittal of a petition signed by many of the residents to the Windsor Town Council. The allegations are heartbreaking.

The Windsor Housing Authority held only a couple of meetings in 2020, blaming the pandemic, even as other commissions held monthly Zoom meetings. It's unclear whether it is only lack of training that has led to the issues in Windsor, but it certainly is at least part of the problem. Training must be required for people who function in a housing authority capacity. And it certainly goes without saying that housing authorities must provide contact information and notify tenants of their rights.

Sincerely,
Donna Grossman
Windsor
May 4, 2021

Related articles in the Hartford Courant:

"Housing authority chairman resigns amid flurry of complaints", Jan 20, 2021 by Steven Goode

"Tenant of Windsor housing project alleges years of poor treatment", Jan 13, 2021 by Steven Goode

"The Windsor Housing Authority's Mill Brook Village", Dec 16, 2020 by Kassi Jackson