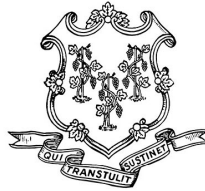


**SENATOR PAUL FORMICA**  
TWENTIETH SENATE DISTRICT

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**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATE**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER PRO TEMPORE**

**RANKING MEMBER**  
ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE  
EXEC. & LEGIS. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**  
FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE

Testimony

Housing Committee Public Hearing

February 18, 2021

*In Support of S.B. 354 - AAC Rental Assistance Payments*

Chairmen Lopes and McGee, Ranking Members Cicarella and Polletta, and the distinguished members of the Housing Committee, I am Sen. Paul Formica, and I wish to testify today in support of Proposed Bill 354 - AAC Rental Assistance Payments.

This bill hopes to highlight a solution to a significant problem that landlords across our state have faced in navigating the TRHAP (Tenant Rental Housing Assistance Program.)

During this pandemic both state and federal officials have issued mandates preventing evictions, most recently with the federal government extending the eviction moratorium until June 2021.

To provide support to struggling tenants, Connecticut initially funded TRHAP with \$40 million and the Governor recently announced an expected \$235 million in additional federal stimulus funds to supplement this program.

The need for this program is apparent as there is a backlog of some 12,000 applicants and the program is currently closed to new applications. To date there have been 5,000 applicants who have received assistance with about \$15 million expended from the fund.

The program snags are:

- The inability to process and pay claims in a timely manner despite the funding, and
- In order for the landlord to receive funding directly, which could be up to \$4,000, the tenant needs to be a part of the application process.

While landlords have tried to engage tenants who have fallen behind, many are not willing to be part of the process as they are protected by the no eviction mandate.

The state seems to have temporarily abandoned the program and has posted the following on the Department of Housing website:

**Temporary Rental Housing Assistance Program (TRHAP)**  
**Programa de Asistencia Temporal Para Alquiler de Viviendas (TRHAP)**

Acting through the Department of Housing (DOH) and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), the State of Connecticut has created the Temporary Rental Housing Assistance Program (TRHAP) to respond to the housing issues associated with the advent of COVID-19.

Thank you for the electronic submission of your Prequalification Information for the Temporary Rental Housing Assistance Program. As the title of the program implies, it was intended to be a temporary assistance program until such time as a permanent rent relief solution and resources were made available.

With the recent passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 the State of Connecticut anticipates receiving \$235,000,000 for rent and utility assistance for low- and moderate-income households that have been impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. We expect to have information available regarding this new initiative in the coming weeks, so please check the DOH website periodically for information.

At this time, as we transition to this new rent and utility relief program, it is necessary to wind down and closeout the temporary program. As such, no further action will be taken with regard to your submission. Please be aware that your contact information has been retained, and you will be contacted directly with information on how to access the new program, expected to open in mid-February 2021.

[TRHAP Submission Status Check](#)

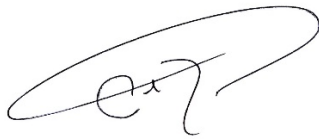
This program has existed for 6 to 8 months and has \$15 million paid, but there are still some landlords locked out while having to try to meet their own financial obligations with no ability to collect rent.

As proposed in this bill, I believe that the solution is removing the tenant from the application process and letting the state primarily deal with the landlord. Once payment is approved and is made directly to the landlord, the landlord must reply to the state indicating the tenant's name and how much time (in days or months) the grant has provided towards the specific tenant's obligation.

In my view this solution should continue the good intent of the program in protecting the tenants while still allowing landlords to satisfy the services that they provide to both the tenants and the community moving forward.

Thank you and I urge support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Formica', enclosed within a large, loopy oval flourish.

Paul M. Formica  
State Senator, 20<sup>th</sup> District