

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-48

AN ACT CONCERNING ADDITIONAL HOUSING PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS
OF FAMILY VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT.

Vote Date: 3/11/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/4/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Anwar- 3rd District
Rep. Winkler- 56th District
Rep. Gilcrest- 18th District
Rep. Palm- 36th District
Rep. Felipe- 130th District
Rep. Michel- 146th District
Rep. Berger-Girvalo- 111th District
Rep. Doucette- 13th District

REASONS FOR BILL:

Thousands of Connecticut residents are subject to domestic and sexual violence. Currently, the Connecticut does not require landlords change the locks to dwellings inhabited by victims of domestic and sexual violence. This bill seeks to address the concerns of these victims by requiring landlords change the locks upon request of the tenant within 2 business days.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Seila Mosquera-Bruno, Commissioner of Housing- **SUPPORTS** – stating the bill increases access to housing resources for survivors of domestic violence, as well as provides "trauma informed, survivor-centered" support services.

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities- **SUPPORTS** – stating victims of domestic violence can face housing discrimination under current rules. One in three women and 1/10 men over 18 experience domestic violence. A quarter of women and one out of seven men experience physical violence with a partner. Domestic violence also affects 325,000 pregnant women annually. This bill works to address these realities. The

Commission also asks that victims of domestic violence be made a protected class in order to prevent future discrimination.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Cara Mackler- Manager of Campus Education, Training & Outreach- Women's Center of Greater Danbury- **SUPPORTS** – stating the bill provides safety for victims of domestic and sexual violence. It is common for abusers to continue to pursue victims, creating a need for victims to feel safe within their own homes.

Liza Andrews- Director of Public Policy and Communications for the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence- **SUPPORTS CONDITIONALLY** – stating this bill would provide safety for victims of domestic and sexual violence by requiring landlords change the locks to dwelling units for such victims. However, she requests language changes in the bill to better reflect the language that landlords will see on a final court order:

Line 10 – after “landlord;” add “(2) the order requires that the respondent or defendant of such order (i) stay

away from the home of the tenant or (ii) stay 100 yards away from the tenant;”

Line 10 – change “(2)” to “(3)”

Line 48 – after “respondent” add “or defendant”

Line 52 – after “respondent” add “or defendant”

Line 66 - after “respondent” add “or defendant.”

Paul J Januszewski- President of the Greater Enfield Landlord Association– **SUPPORTS CONDITIONALLY** – stating he supports the bill but believes believe that neither landlord nor their agent should be held responsible if they cannot change the locks immediately. Furthermore, the cost of lock changes should not fall on the landlord.

AnnMarie Puelo– **SUPPORTS CONDITIONALLY** – stating that this bill provides protection for victims of domestic and sexual violence. However, the cost of the replacement of the lock should not come from the landlord and should instead be taken from the security deposit. It should not be the responsibly to keep the tenant safe.

Adam Bonoff – **SUPPORTS** – stating that there should be no suppression of criminal records, mothers deserve to be protected.

The following **SUPPORT SB 48** stating that Connecticut does not currently require landlords to change the locks upon request of victims of domestic and sexual violence. It can be traumatic for victims who have gained a restraining order against an abuser to not feel safe in their own home. Several states across the country have taken similar actions:

Emily Clintorino, JD, MSW- Community Counselor at the Prudence Crandell Center

Madeline Granato- Policy Director for the CWEALF

Brandi Kennedy- Family Violence Victim Advocate for New Horizons Domestic Violence Services

Kerry Linden- Child and Family Advocate Specialist at Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury

Alyssa Martin- Director of New Horizon Domestic Violence Services

Elizabeth Mauro- Executive Director of Women's Support Services

Penni Micca- Legislative Liaison for the Interval House

Lee Schlesinger- Executive Director of Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury

Angela Schlingheyde- Director of Civil Legal and Court Advocacy Services at the Center for Family Justice

Jenna Sencabaugh- Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

The following **SUPPORT SB 48**, stating the bill creates a safer environment for victims of domestic and sexual violence. One quarter of women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. Violence forces victims to flee their homes and even travel across the country to escape their abusers. This bill is a cost-effective way to give victims safety and peace of mind, while also bringing Connecticut law in line with that of 15 other states:

Alana

Sebastian Baez

Kennedy Bennett

Esha Bhattacharya

Colby Bladow

Rachel Brown

Sydney Bryant

Josephine Cureton

Maansi Dasari

William Garcia

Margaret Hanksins

Nick Jacobson

Nicole Jefferson

Sophie Kane

Abby Leighton

Anjali Mangla

Isabella Morales

Galia Newberger

Evan Roberts

Rosie

Megan Ruoro

Ishani Singh

Katie Taylor

The following **SUPPORT SB 48**:

Helen Nixon

Caroline Raynis

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Adam Bonoff- **OPPOSES** – stating there should be no suppression of criminal records. Mothers deserve to be look out for.

Anthony Johnson- Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials – **OPPOSES** – stating the bill overlaps with federal law, leading to duplicative intent for housing authorities. Furthermore, he requests the bill clarify who bears the cost of the lock change.

Reported by: Gabriel Turco

Date: [Type Date]