

# Planning and Development Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6391

AN ACT INCREASING PENALTIES FOR THE VIOLATION OF MUNICIPAL  
**Title:** REGULATIONS AND ORDINANCES.

**Vote Date:** 3/20/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Judiciary

**PH Date:** 2/17/2023

**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill increases the maximum penalty that municipalities may impose for violations of municipal ordinances from \$250 to \$1,000 (adjusted annually for inflation). Existing law provides that municipalities may establish the amount by ordinance and specifies different limits for certain offenses (e.g., illegal dumping).

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Justin Elicker, Chief Administration Officer, City of New Haven:](#) Supports this bill

A ceiling of \$1,000 would allow a graduated penalty that would start at \$100 or \$250 for a first offence and allow for a stiffer penalty for subsequent offences helping to modify behavior.

[Rebecca Bombero, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, City of New Haven:](#) Supports this bill

A ceiling of \$1,000 would allow a graduated penalty that would start at \$100 or \$250 for a first offence and allow for a stiffer penalty for subsequent offences helping to modify behavior.

[Betsy Gara, Executive Director Connecticut Council of Small Towns:](#) Supports this bill

The cap on civil penalties has not been updated since 2006, undermining the ability of municipalities to enforce various local laws. Increasing the maximum penalty for violation of

local ordinances will ensure that towns have an effective tool to deter violators and enforce local laws to protect the health and well-being of the community.

**[Donna Hamzy Carroccia, Chief Strategy Officer, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities \(CCM\)](#)**: Supports this bill

HB 6391 provides a more financially burdensome consequence for the violation of a local ordinance which in turn should help to deter such violations.

**[Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Council, American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut \(ACLU-CT\)](#)**: Opposes this bill

The General Assembly must continue to make progress towards reducing the number of people who have contact with the criminal legal system and reducing the financial burdens that we place on people. Exponentially increasing the maximum fine that municipalities can charge for ordinance violations is likely to further entrench people, especially families of color, into cycles of poverty.

**[Eli Sabin, Legislative Coordinator, Connecticut Voices for Children](#)**: Supports this bill

Over the last several years, landlords across Connecticut have been taken to criminal court on charges of violating local housing codes. In many of these cases, the landlords have pled guilty and then paid the maximum fine of \$250 per violation. Because this fine is so low, many landlords appear to be comfortable paying the fine rather than doing proper and consistent maintenance, creating unsafe living conditions for tenants.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**[Mark Wilson, Manager of Neighborhood & Commercial Development, City of New Haven](#)**: Supports this bill

We have many large landlords in New Haven who do a fine job in maintaining their properties. But there are, however, some landlords who are more likely to chance gambling on paying a small fine rather than implementing a preventive maintenance plan, because simply put, the payoff is bigger. If the stakes were raised and the cost to play was much higher, we believe that more landlords would come to see the overall good in maintaining their properties and if not, the potential cost of failing to do so.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**[Paul Januszewski, Housing Provider, Greater Enfield area](#)**:

This bill grossly inflates fines for infractions that may be imposed by municipalities. Fines when imposed should be regulated according to the severity of the infraction and need to be levied against the violator, not the property owner.

**Anonymous:**

Fines when imposed need to be regulated according to the severity of the infraction and need to be levied against the violator, not the property owner.

**Anonymous:**

"I am a Connecticut resident and I oppose all of these upcoming bills"

**Reported by: Robert Mayne**

**Date: March 23, 2023**