

Written Testimony to the Connecticut General Assembly Joint Committee on
Judiciary in Support of Raised House Bill-6588

To Representative Luxenberg, Senator Moore, and members of the Housing
Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB-6588 - AN
ACT CONCERNING RENT STABILIZATION. While I am supportive of this bill in
general, I will suggest some important revisions that will make the bill even more
effective.

My name is Whitney Denary. I am a doctoral student at Yale University and a renter in
New Haven, CT. The views expressed in this letter are solely my own and they do not
represent the views of organizations that I currently or previously have been affiliated
with.

I have been conducting research on housing at the Yale [Housing and Health Equity
Lab](#) for the past three years. Our research investigates the health impacts of housing
policy, including federally funded rental assistance, the eviction moratoria that
occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Right to Counsel Program that is
being trialed in several Connecticut cities. Tenants have expressed the physical and
mental health concerns they experience due to building rent burden.

Our interviews with tenants in Connecticut have demonstrated the lengths that
families go to in their attempt to find safe and affordable rental units. Some single
mothers I have spoken with will work multiple jobs, totaling 60-80 hours of work a
week to be able to make enough money to afford their rent. One mom, Jamie, lives
about an hour away from her family and work because she could not find a closer
affordable unit. Her commute and long work hours prevent her from being able to
spend quality time with her child, to care for her diabetic health needs such as eating
healthy meals or exercising, and to dedicate time to advancing her career.

Connecticut has a severe housing affordability problem, with [51% of CT tenants](#)
experiencing rent burden, defined by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development as
when a household contributes over 30% of their income toward rent. Rent burden is a
particular health concern for children. A report from the [National Center for Children
in Poverty](#) highlighted that children living in areas with unaffordable housing are
more likely to not have enough food, to postpone health care, to be held back in
school, and to have lower health overall ratings.

A rent cap will prevent an increasing number of households from experiencing rent burden across the state. This will provide a stable foundation for families to remain housed in one place which will prevent children from changing schools and doctors and encourage households to invest in their communities without fear of being priced out.

I strongly support a rent cap in Connecticut; however, I would recommend a key change to HB-6588 to ensure that the rent cap will work best for our community. I encourage the committee to consider a **stable rent cap of 3%**. The proposed rent cap in this bill is dependent on inflation. This year, that would mean the rent cap in 2021 would be approximately 10% (4% proposed plus a 6% inflation rate). At this rate increase, a family paying \$1000 per month could see their rent double in less than 10 years. Because inflation does not necessarily mean a wage increase for all, it is important to keep the rent cap at a stable rate to ensure that tenants who make around minimum wage will not be priced out of housing.

I thank you for your consideration of my comments,

Whitney Denary, MPH
Doctoral Student
Yale School of Public Health