



Partnership for Strong Communities promotes equitable change in Connecticut housing policy by coordinating advocacy, advancing research, and uniting diverse partners.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSING COMMITTEE

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FEBRUARY 20, 2024**

Support S.B. 143: AN ACT CONCERNING EVICTIONS FOR CAUSE

Senator Moore, Representative Khan, Senator Sampson, Representative Scott, and distinguished members of the Housing Committee, my name is Sean Ghio, and I am the Policy Director at Partnership for Strong Communities. We are a statewide nonprofit research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring everyone in Connecticut has a safe, stable home that is affordable to them in an equitable community of their choice.

We respectfully request that the committee **support S.B. 143: An Act Concerning Evictions for Cause**. This bill will extend just cause protections to all renters (except in owner-occupied 1-4 units).

We support measures to ensure Connecticut families who rent their homes have predictability, stability, and affordability. Connecticut's rental market is out of balance, and low-income renters are bearing the cost. That this bill is before your committee, that so many renters are telling you their stories, demonstrates just how unhealthy our housing system has become. It is in these circumstances that we rightly look to the state to protect renters and ensure a stable rental market.

These protections will help prevent arbitrary evictions and provide stability and security for renters, allowing them to plan for their future and avoid the trauma and disruption of forced displacement. With more protections in place, landlords will no longer be able to retaliate or discriminate against tenants or otherwise displace renters by evicting them without cause.

Rents have increased 20% in the last three years resulting in evictions occurring at higher rates than pre-pandemic averages.¹ As of February 2024, eviction filings were about 5 percent higher statewide than before COVID. Filings were 11 percent higher in Fairfield County and in Hartford County.² In 2023, no-cause evictions made up 11% of all evictions. While there are likely many more families at risk of experiencing a no-cause eviction, most renters faced with the threat of eviction choose to leave voluntarily rather than endure the eviction process.

Most CT renters have no protection against no-fault evictions. Tenants with month-to-month leases can be evicted with only 30 days' notice – leaving no time to find replacement housing. Evictions have traumatic and lasting effects on families. Evictions worsen housing insecurity, increase homelessness, and make communities less stable, cohesive, and safe.

Renter income has not increased at the same pace as skyrocketing rents, putting low-income renters at a distinct disadvantage and at high risk of housing instability, eviction, and homelessness. Research demonstrates that once median rent surpasses 30% of an area's median income, the rate of homelessness begins to increase more rapidly. Fairfield County has already surpassed that threshold with median rent costing 32% of median income.³ 52% of CT renters are housing cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their gross monthly income on rent.

Just cause protections are also a matter of justice. People of color and women are disproportionately impacted by eviction – Black and Latino renters in CT are 2-3 times more likely to be evicted than white renters, and Black families, undocumented families, seniors, and people with disabilities disproportionately experience housing cost-burden in our state.

Just cause protections are critical and should be implemented alongside other policies and investments to improve housing stability, safety, and affordability for renters. We

¹ <https://www.apartmentlist.com/research/category/data-rent-estimates>

²² [The Eviction Lab](#)

³County level median rent figures taken from <https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>. Median income figures from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/fairfieldcountyconnecticut,CT/PST045221>

still need to build thousands more homes. We need additional investment in rental assistance. We need significant zoning reform. But none of these matter unless renters have the protections to provide the housing stability all residents deserve.

Together, we have an opportunity, and the responsibility, to confront the dual crises facing our state: the economic challenges of a housing market that has long since moved past the edges of affordability and is now completely out of reach for thousands, and the human toll of housing instability and homelessness that threatens the very fabric of our communities.

We must confront these crises head-on, to bridge the gap between unaffordability and accessibility, and to ensure that no one is left behind. Expanded just cause eviction protections is a necessary start.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.