February 19, 2024

Connecticut General Assembly
Housing Committee
Hon. Representative Moore, Chair
Hon. Senator Kahn, Chair

RE: Bill No. S.B. 143
Position: Opposing

My name is Jeffrey Weisman. I am an attorney practicing law in the area of Landlord/Tenant matters. I am writing in opposition to Bill No. S.B. 143

I was reviewing an email from a landlord client today writing with a request to evict a nuisance tenant. The client forwarded a complaint to me written by one of the tenants in the building. The tenant writes about the fear they are living in because of the offending tenant. She called the police, but she is afraid that the offending tenant will find out that she called, and she will be in danger. Most tenants will not agree to testify against their neighbors because they fear retribution. I recall a time when I would receive complaints about landlords not evicting nuisance tenants that were paying. In more recent years I have seen landlords make a concerted effort to evict nuisance tenants so their other tenants can live in peace and safety. As an attorney I must advise my clients of the great difficulty in proving a nuisance case. Tenants are afraid to come forward and testify against their neighbors and the police are reluctant to get involved, rarely make arrests and are often very limited in what they can do. I am often going to advise my client to serve a Notice to Quit for Lapse of Time. Taking away that right from landlords will be removing a valuable tool that landlords utilize to provide safe and peaceful housing to their tenants and their families and to protect them from bad tenants.

The cost and expense of a nuisance eviction is far greater than that of a Lapse of Time eviction. Those expenses will be passed on to the other tenants. We are seeing a surge in the cost to rent an apartment in Connecticut. Much of the need to increase rents is related to the administrative costs and burdens resulting from new laws and regulations. Our office had to try a nuisance case in Torrington last year. The case required a trial over two half days. We had to subpoena the police officers, fire inspector and health inspectors involved in the case. The cost of that was borne by the municipality. More importantly, these officers and officials could have been out in the field keeping the town safe. Additionally, we had to call several employees from management, and we had to call at least one tenant to testify. That tenant had to take two days off from work, which she could not afford to do. Included in the extensive court resources was the need for a court appointed interpreter for the defendant.

There are many reasons why this bill should not be made into law. It is not good for landlords or tenants. The two reasons highlighted herein are:

1. This bill if passed would remove a very helpful tool that provides landlord’s an ability to provide clean, safe and peaceful housing to their tenants.

2. Lapse of Time is a cost-effective manner to remove problem tenants to the benefit of other tenants and the landlord. For cause evictions like nuisance are costly and are a drain on municipal resources. The burden of these costs will ultimately be placed on tenants in the form of higher rents.

For the above reasons the undersigned respectfully urges the defeat of S.B. 143.

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Jeffrey L. Weisman