
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6943

AN ACT CONCERNING PROTECTIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL TENANTS.

SUMMARY

This bill makes several changes in residential landlord-tenant laws, including the following:

1. requires landlords, at an occupant's request, to provide an accounting for the dwelling unit showing assessed charges, completed payments, and any balance owed or surplus paid (§ 1);
2. prohibits rental agreements from requiring that tenants pay a surcharge or increased rent for occupying a dwelling unit under a month-to-month tenancy or holding over beyond the lease term (§ 2, and see below);
3. prohibits marketing for use in Connecticut a residential or form lease with provisions contrary to state law, and makes violations an unfair or deceptive trade practice under the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act (see BACKGROUND) (§ 4); and
4. requires written rent increase notices that landlords must provide to tenants under existing law (see BACKGROUND) to also state that tenants can dispute an increase by filing a complaint with the municipality's fair rent commission (§ 3).

The bill's notice requirement only applies to dwelling units located in a municipality with an existing commission (see BACKGROUND).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

PROHIBITED RENTAL AGREEMENT TERMS

The bill prohibits rental agreements from specifying that a tenant

must agree to a rent increase (or pay a surcharge) if they remain in the dwelling unit past the agreement's expiration (i.e. hold over). It also appears to prohibit any rental agreement provision establishing a higher rental rate for a month-to-month tenancy than a fixed-term tenancy.

By law, if a tenant holds over after a lease term expires, it is not evidence of an agreement for a further lease (CGS § 47a-3d). Additionally, unless a rental agreement sets a definite term, the tenancy is month-to-month (with the exception of week-to-week tenancies where the tenant pays weekly rent) (CGS § 47a-3b).

Existing law makes statutorily prohibited rental agreement provisions unenforceable.

BACKGROUND

CUTPA

By law, CUTPA prohibits businesses from engaging in unfair and deceptive acts or practices. It allows the consumer protection commissioner, under specified procedures, to issue regulations defining an unfair trade practice, investigate complaints, issue cease and desist orders, order restitution in cases involving less than \$10,000, impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000, enter into consent agreements, ask the attorney general to seek injunctive relief, and accept voluntary statements of compliance. It also allows individuals to sue. Courts may issue restraining orders; award actual and punitive damages, costs, and reasonable attorney's fees; and impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000 for willful violations and up to \$25,000 for a restraining order violation.

Fair Rent Commissions

The law authorizes municipalities (and requires those with a population of at least 25,000) to establish fair rent commissions. These commissions are generally empowered to (1) control and eliminate excessive (i.e. harsh and unconscionable) rental charges and (2) enforce landlord-tenant statutes prohibiting landlord retaliation and establishing eviction protections for certain protected tenants. Among other things, commissions may receive rent complaints and hold hearings on them (CGS § 7-148b et seq.).

Notice of Rent Increases

Beginning with rental agreements entered, renewed, or extended on or after October 1, 2024, the law generally requires landlords to give residential tenants at least 45 days’ written notice of proposed rent increases, or an amount of notice that equals the full length of the lease for tenants with lease terms of one month or less. It prohibits rent increases from taking effect unless the landlord complies with this notice requirement.

Related Bills

sSB 12, reported favorably by the Housing Committee, also expands the list of prohibited provisions for rental agreements by prohibiting those requiring that tenants pay for utilities if their dwelling unit does not have a separate meter for them (§ 5). Additionally, the bill generally requires all municipalities to have a fair rent commission or joint fair rent commission; it also allows municipalities that are members of a regional council of governments (COG) to meet this requirement by creating a regional fair rent commission with their COG (§ 6).

sSB 1264, sSB 1266 (File 72), and HB 6892, all reported favorably by the Housing Committee, contain various provisions impacting fair rent commissions and their operation.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Housing Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 12 Nay 6 (03/06/2025)