

Senator Marilyn Moore
And Members of the Housing Committee
Proposed Bill – S.B 143
Tuesday 11am February 20th Rm 2B

IN OPPOSITION

My name is Lauren Tagliatela and I work at my family's 106-year-old business Franklin Communities. We own and manage over 1,200 apartment homes in the Greater New Haven region. In my 20 years of working in the housing industry, I have housed tens of thousands of individuals, families, teachers, police officers, students, and seniors in both conventional and affordable apartments. I also serve as the co-chair of the Connecticut Apartment Association's Government Relations Committee.

I am writing in opposition of SB 143 as this bill would severely impact the way I can manage my properties. A lease is a contract—with a start and end date agreed to by the housing provider and resident. When the term ends, both parties can choose whether or not to renew. There are several reasons why a resident's lease is not renewed, and many times it is because of lease violations that pose harm to other residents or our employees. One example from my own business, is we had a resident who repeatedly defecated in a common area of the building. They received several warnings and fines but refused to stop this behavior. We did not renew their lease. If they had not vacated, we would have proceeded to eviction, which is always our last resort. Another example is a resident moves into a known smoke-free building. They do not comply with the smoke-free rule and smokes in his/her apartment. Other tenants close by have a child with severe asthma that is affected by the smoke in the building. We send a notice for the lease-violating resident to stop smoking in the apartment. They don't stop. We send a fine for a lease violation. They refuse to stop. After several attempts to resolve this, we do not renew their lease because they refuse to abide by the lease rules, and it is affecting other resident's health, wellbeing, and safety. If the resident does not leave at the end of the lease, we must start the eviction process.

In 2022, Gov. Scott of Vermont vetoed a similar just cause eviction bill. "*By eliminating a property owner's ability to end a lease agreement at the time of the **mutually agreed upon end date** within a lease, this 'Just cause eviction' law effectively creates the potential for **perpetual tenancy**, undermining private property rights and a foundational principle of choosing to rent your property.*"

I want to address the part of this bill that eliminates section 47a-23c and gives tenancy rights to squatters. The elimination of this statute is disastrous, unsafe, and would make it impossible to evict any squatter in any situation. How can tenancy rights be given to someone we never signed a lease with? These unauthorized occupants would not be bound to pay rent or follow any lease policies and yet we would not be able to evict them from our properties. This would make our communities unsafe for families we seek to house.

Lastly, Cause Evictions are difficult to prove. I cannot bring smoke or noise to a courtroom and other residents are afraid to testify against their neighbors out of fear of retaliation and violence. Good tenants want their landlords to protect them. If we can't resolve issues for them, they will move out, which uproots families and children from their homes.

My family and our fellow members of the Connecticut Apartment Association are part of the fabric of housing in our state. We love the work we do helping our resident individuals and families find—and stay in—quality, affordable rental living in stable, safe communities. **When one resident's quality of life is harmed by another resident who violates their lease, no housing provider should be left powerless to help. This bill would take away an important tool for accountability and the protection of our apartment communities.**

I urge you to oppose this bill and focus on ways to increase much needed affordable apartment housing development. This bill does nothing to address the affordability problem in our state and discourages new housing development from being built.

Lauren Tagliatela
Chief Community Officer

