

Testimony from John Souza of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO)
Before the Housing Committee 2/20/2024
SB 143 & HB 5156

Good afternoon Representative Khan, Senator Moore and esteemed members of the Housing Committee. My name is John Souza and I volunteer as President of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners and I'm a full-time landlord. The Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO) is one of Connecticut's largest landlord/property owner organizations. CCOPO has affiliates in Enfield, Windham, Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, New Britain and Stamford, as well as the CT Association of Real Estate Investors (CAREI) in West Hartford. Our members own thousands of rental units throughout Connecticut, consisting of mostly small and medium sized landlords.

For over 25 years CCOPO has been a constructive voice for responsible landlords on such issues as: nuisance abatement, bedbugs, domestic violence and many others. We are here to represent the small to midsize landlord, and most members are local residents of the towns they serve.

Oppose SB143 An ACT CONCERNING THE EVICTIONS FOR A CAUSE

Property owners never want to evict people, it is often the last resort when we have no other solution. An eviction costs tons of money in legal costs and often lost rents as well, so you can believe there is a reason for it. When rent payment is not the issue and someone becomes troublesome, for any of numerous reasons, the lapse of time eviction is the best solution.IT IS A GRACEFUL WAY TO END A REALTIONSHIP WITH A TENANT. With the existing lapse of time statues, even after judgement, tenants can ask for up to 6 months additional time to find a new place, unlike other reasons for eviction.

Examples of behaviors that are not easily documented, so lapse of time is used to end tenancy.

- 1) Julian smokes marijuana in his apartment even though it is not allowed in the lease. Other tenants complain but are not willing or able to testify in court to those facts. Since, Mr. Landlord can't bring a bag of smoke into court as proof that Julian is not following his lease, Mr. Landlord decides to terminate the lease at the end of the term to solve the problem. Julian would still be able to ask for 6 additional months to find a new place to live.
- 2) Rocco is a large guy and contentiously intimidates other tenants into giving him money and cigarettes. The entire building is afraid of him and tries to avoid Rocco but it's mostly unsuccessful. No one wants to testify in court against Rocco in

fear for themselves, so Mrs. Landlord serves a lapse of time notice to quit at the end of Rocco's lease.

- Lapse of Time Evictions allow property owners to control the quality of life for our residents.
- Housing Providers need the ability to remove tenants to remodel, when necessary to maintain high quality housing standards.
- No other business is forced to renew a contract against their will, so why force housing providers?
- This bill will also eliminate the ability of a property owner to remove persons not on a lease from the premises. IE: Squatters.
- This bill would eliminate family members from removing a non-paying son or daughter from the family home. If "when one originally had the right or privilege to occupy such premises but such right or privilege has terminated" is eliminated as a reason for eviction. Example: elderly parent in nursing home and the family wants to sell the house to pay the bills. If one adult child will not move from said home there are no grounds to remove him within the law. This will cause great hardship for many people.
- **This is a fundamental property right, to choose if I want to renew a lease or not. The government should not interfere.**

Oppose HB 5156 An Act Notices of rent increases.

For the 35 years that I've been in business we have not needed such a law to get between myself and tenants in any lease contracts. We are consenting adults and can decide between ourselves what terms we will agree upon with any new lease, including notice of any rent increases. Tenants have the ability to go in front of a fair rent commission if they believe the rent increase is unfair or occurs too often. So please use your time this year to pass more useful bills that will help tenants like SB 142, SB 145, SB 146, and SB 147.

Thank you for your time and I can answer any questions.

John Souza
President
Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO)
860-983-6974
Johnpsouza88@aol.com