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NEW HAVEN LEGAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Housing Advocates and Experts Call For Legislative Action To Address Connecticut's Eviction Crisis

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New Haven, CT [October 17, 2023] - A group of housing advocates and experts gathered Monday to rail against the state's failure to address the eviction crisis and call for solutions.

The panel convened Monday to discuss Connecticut's eviction crisis in a virtual discussion hosted by New Haven Legal Assistance Association.

"Housing affordability is particularly a problem in Connecticut, compared to the country as a whole," said **Samaila Adelaiye, Research and Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children and author of a recent report offering solutions to the housing crisis.** "Connecticut has been building much fewer houses since around 2008 which is contributing to the long term problem. We learned from the pandemic that certain protections helped keep people in stable housing, and the lifting of those protections resulted in a major problem once again."

These protections, including the housing moratorium which expired in June 2021 and the child tax credit, helped protect the roughly 34 percent of Connecticut families who live in rented homes, of which 59.4 percent are Black and 63.1 percent are Hispanic or Latina/o/x.

"There is, of course, a need for tenant protections, but that alone won't solve our problems because we have a supply problem, an affordability problem, and a restrictive zoning problem," said **Chelsea Ross, Executive Director at The Partnership for Strong Communities.** "On top of that, there is an imbalance of power in the legislature in terms of who has a voice and who doesn't."

That power imbalance is what has led to the creation and formalization of several tenants unions across the state, which this panel agrees is an important step in ensuring fair renting practices. "There is an increasing industrialization of landlordship in Connecticut," said **Elizabeth Rosenthal, Deputy Director at New Haven Legal Assistance Association**. "There is a problem with the overrepresentation of property owners' rights in the legislative process."

"Historically, landlords have been a really organized lobbying group, going back to when only property owners could vote," **Ginny Monk, Housing and Children's Issues Reporter for the CT Mirror** said.

“In Connecticut, efforts are being made by the tenant union to organize in a more formal way in order to give them more lobbying power in the coming legislative session.”

The virtual event, which was prompted by Connecticut's Voices for Children's report, Addressing Connecticut’s Eviction Crisis: Policy Options for Medium- and Long-Term Reforms, explored both the roots of the eviction crisis and potential short, medium and long term solutions that could help alleviate the problem.

People experiencing the threat of eviction should visit www.ctlawhelp.com.

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ABOUT NEW HAVEN LEGAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION

NHLAA offers free, high-quality legal services to people living in poverty in New Haven County and the Lower Naugatuck Valley. They strive to provide equal access to the justice system, enhance the rights and living conditions of our client community, and help the client community protect their own rights. NHLAA accomplish these goals by providing legal advice, brief service, and full representation to individual clients; strategically prioritizing legal work that will make systemic improvements benefitting large numbers of low-income people; and engaging in community education and outreach. They represent seniors, people with mental and physical disabilities, children, domestic violence survivors, immigrants, low-wage workers, families at risk of homelessness, and individuals who face additional challenges to representing themselves, such as those with limited English proficiency.