PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES

Partnership for Strong Communities promotes equitable change in Connecticut housing policy by coordinating advocacy, advancing research, and uniting diverse partners

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA
PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES
MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2025

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Senator Kissel, and Representative Fishbein, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. I am Alysha Gardner, Senior Policy Analyst with the Partnership for Strong Communities. We are a statewide nonprofit research, policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring everyone in Connecticut has a safe, stable home that is affordable to them in an equitable community of their choice.

We respectfully request that the committee oppose **HB 7140 – AN ACT CONCERNING FAIR RENT COMMISSION PROCEDDINGS.**

The proposed adjustments to the Fair Rent Commission statute would require municipal Fair Rent Commissions (FRCs) to follow the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (UAPA), significantly increasing the administrative and bureaucratic burdens on FRCs. THE UAPA was written to govern state agency procedures supported by dedicated, full-time staffers; in contrast, FRCs are typically comprised of community volunteers who make rulings based on a straightforward standard of what constitutes an unconscionable or fair rental increase. There is no reason to selectively apply the UAPA to FRCs when similar entities are not subjected to increased reporting requirements.

The Partnership supports the continued expansion of Fair Rent Commissions into more towns statewide on the basis that a person's zip code should not determine their access to rights and due process. **One in three of all Connecticut residents rent their homes, and legislation which increases the administrative burden on Fair Rent Commissions without accompanying support or any clear benefit will reduce their effectiveness and thereby lessen the protections available to CT residents.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Alysha Gardner, Senior Policy Analyst
Partnership for Strong Communities