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 HOUSING COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA
PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES
FEBRUARY 24, 2026

SUPPORT S.B. 257 – AN ACT CONCERNING EVICTIONS FOR CAUSE

Senator Marx, Representative Felipe, Senator Sampson, Representative Scott, and distinguished members of the Housing Committee, thank you for the opportunity testify in support of S.B. 257 – AN ACT CONCERNING EVICTIONS FOR CAUSE. I am Sean Ghio, Policy Director 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.

Expanding just cause eviction protections to more renter households is a critical step toward housing stability in Connecticut. Current law protects only seniors and some individuals with disabilities, leaving most renters vulnerable to eviction without cause, including retaliation or income-based displacement. Broader just cause protections would still allow landlords to evict tenants for legitimate reasons including nonpayment of rent, property damage or lease violations This bill helps to balance power between landlords and tenants. It ensures that responsible tenants who pay their rent and comply with their lease cannot be forced from their homes arbitrarily.

Connecticut's rental market is out of balance, and low-income renters are bearing the greatest costs of our housing affordability crisis. Over the past two years, you have heard from hundreds of renters whose stories reflect how unstable and precarious our housing system has become. In these circumstances, it is appropriate for the state to act protect renters and ensure a stable rental market.

Rents have increased 29% since 2021[1] resulting in people being evicted at rates higher than pre-pandemic averages. No-fault evictions nearly doubled during the COVID-19 pandemic and

[1] Apartment List, Historic Rent Estimates, February 14, 2025. https://www.apartmentlist.com/research/category/data-rent-estimates

continue to make up around 11% of eviction filings.[2] Among renters in Connecticut who were not current on rent, approximately 38.4% reported feeling at risk of eviction, slightly higher than the national average of 37.8%.[3] Importantly, many renters facing the threat of eviction choose to leave voluntarily rather than endure the eviction process, even when the eviction may be retaliatory. This means the true scope of no-cause displacement is likely far greater than court data reflects.

Most Connecticut renters have no protection against no-fault evictions. Tenants with month-to-month leases can be evicted with only 30 days' notice – leaving no time to find replacement housing. Evictions have traumatic and lasting effects on families. Evictions worsen housing security, increase homelessness, and make our communities less stable, cohesive, and safe.

Since 2021, homelessness has increased 44%. In the past year alone, unsheltered homelessness rose 45%, and there are 45% more people living outside across communities in every ZIP code—rural, suburban, and urban alike[4]. When people are evicted and carry the "Scarlet E" on their rental history, it becomes harder for them to secure stable housing, increasing the number of families and individuals forced to live outdoors.

This winter has been brutally cold for days and sometimes weeks at a time. With shelters already at or beyond max capacity providing warming centers during these times, it is imperative that we prevent people from falling into homelessness in the first place. When the only place people experiencing homelessness can afford to live in is their cars, in a tent, or under a bridge, they are left at increased risk of facing life threatening or even fatal conditions without other alternatives for safety or care.

Rents have risen far faster than renter incomes, leaving many low-income households at a severe disadvantage and at high risk of housing instability, eviction, and homelessness.[5] Research shows

[2]Ginny Monk, "No-cause Evictions in CT More than Doubled During the Pandemic," CT Mirror, March 2022, available at: https://ctmirror.org/2022/03/30/no-cause-evictions-in-ct-more-than-doubled-during-the-pandemic/; CT Fair Housing Center analysis of Judicial Branch data for 2023.

[3] Partnership for Strong Communities, The State of Housing In Connecticut, January 2026. https://pschousing.org/state-of-housing-in-connecticut-2025/

[4] Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, Bring People Inside During Extreme Weather, 2026. http://cceh.org/2026-pa-fact-sheets/

[5] Partnership for Strong Communities 2026 Housing Stability Fact Sheet; https://pschousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2026_Stability.pdf

that when median rent exceeds 30% of an area's median income, homelessness increases more rapidly—a threshold Fairfield County has already crossed.[6]

Expanding just cause protections is essential to supporting families with young children. Nearly half of the tenants represented through Connecticut's Right to Counsel program have young children at home, underscoring how deeply eviction risks affect families.[7] Research from the Eviction Lab shows that children—and particularly Black children—face the highest likelihood of eviction.[8]

Experiencing eviction during early childhood is strongly linked to increased likelihood of future housing instability and poverty in adulthood. The negative effects of eviction in early life can persist into adulthood, contributing to cycles of poverty and disadvantage.[9]

Further research has shown that the effects eviction has on young children are widespread:

1. **Health Impacts:** Children who experience evictions are at higher risk for neurodevelopmental issues and other health problems.[10]
2. **Emotional and Behavioral Effects:** Eviction can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems in young children.[11]
3. **Educational Disruptions:** Eviction orders increase the likelihood of school changes and absences, and lower academic performance.[12]
4. **Parental Stress and Family Instability:** Eviction exacerbates parental stress, affecting their ability to provide stable and responsive caregiving. These studies underscore the

[6] County level median rent figures taken from https://www.zillow.com/research/data/. Median income figures from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/fairfieldcountyconnecticut,CT/PST045221
[7] https://evictionhelpct.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Stouts-Year-3-CT-RTC-Inde-Eval.pdf
[8] https://evictionlab.org/who-is-evicted-in-america/
[9] https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/articles/eviction-health-risks-black-children
[10] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10091158/
[11] https://hms.harvard.edu/news/evictions-haunt-families-harm-childrens-health
[12] https://harris.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Tannenbaum%20PPE%20seminar%20abstract%2010-22-24.pdf

critical need for policies and interventions aimed at preventing eviction to protect the well-being and development of young children.[13]

Just cause protections are essential to ensuring stable, safe, and affordable housing for renters. Connecticut must continue building more homes, expanding rental assistance, and advancing zoning reform—but these efforts alone are not enough. Without stronger tenant protections, including expanded just-cause eviction standards, families will continue to face preventable housing instability.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sean Ghio
Policy Director

[13] https://petrieflom.law.harvard.edu/2022/11/02/pandemic-eviction-policy-children