

# Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** HB-5261 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT PERMITTING MUNICIPALITIES TO PROHIBIT RENT INCREASES IN  
**Title:** THE EVENT OF MULTIPLE STATE BUILDING CODE VIOLATIONS.

**Vote Date:** 3/5/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/24/2026

**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Housing Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill would permit municipalities to adopt ordinances that limit a property owner's ability to raise rents upon multiple state building code violations. The legislature hopes that with this legislation, property owners are more inclined to address issues at their property promptly to retain their ability to raise rents. The legislation also seeks to protect tenants by ensuring rents cannot be raised when a property owner has multiple building code violations, incumbent on adoption by the municipalities' legislative body adopting such policy.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None Expressed.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Town of Rocky Hill, Miriam Lifshitz-Theroux, Deputy Mayor** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing the recent residential housing complex failure in Rocky Hill which occurred on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026. She shared that because of that experience, municipalities require targeted tools that change incentives before a situation escalates into a crisis. She noted that this legislation does not impose a statewide mandate but creates local authority to act where local conditions warrant it. She stated that it aligns incentives in the portion of the housing market where misaligned incentives do the most harm, those being large rental properties where serious code issues can persist, where residents have limited leverage, and where ownership can be distant, layered, or insulated from the day-to-day consequences of noncompliance. She pointed out that the state's housing policy should

reinforce habitability and code compliance as prerequisites for rent escalation. Miriam expressed that this legislation supports early corrective action, improves fairness for tenants, rewards responsible housing providers, and preserves municipal discretion and local democratic control. She emphasizes that the bill is carefully limited in that it applies when two or more violations are outstanding and ends when those violations are remedied. She noted that this legislation strengthens housing stability in a way that aligns with core municipal responsibilities. She expressed rent should not move upward until compliance is restored and that this approach is grounded in fairness, enforcement logic, and common sense.

**Open Communities Alliance, Victoria Asfalq, Policy and Data Analyst** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing an incident in Rocky Hill where a large apartment complex was recently evacuated due to unsafe living conditions that were the fault of the property owner. She continues noting that two thousand residents were displaced because that out of state corporation was able to get away with unsafe living conditions. She stated that this legislation offers an important protection for tenants who are stuck living in these unjust conditions.

**Connecticut Voices for Children, Carmen N. Clarkin, MPH, Special Assistant for Strategic Initiatives** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing that landlord accountability measures are critical to keeping renters safe and ensuring landlords fulfill their responsibilities to tenants. She continues stating that local and state governments often have difficulties holding absentee landlords accountable for maintenance and safety issues at rental properties because contacting them and imposing civil or criminal fines for building code violations can be extremely difficult. She stated that a significant number of violations across the state go unreported, unaddressed, or unpunished, which often harms the state's most vulnerable.

**Partnership for Strong Communities, Alysha Gardner, Senior Policy Analyst** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing that in conversations with local commissioners, a common driver of Fair Rent Commission complaints are not only rental increases but also safety violations. She noted that Fair Rent Commissions have become a last resort to pursue solutions for health and safety violations and unlivable conditions. She pointed out that while Fair Rent Commissions can issue rulings, they possess limited enforcement mechanisms, and their rulings are not always consistent across complaints. She stated that this legislation creates a concrete, remediation-focused penalty for bad actors who seek to increase rent while failing to maintain safe conditions. She added that as a municipal opt-in, the legislation also allows larger, better staffed municipalities to experiment with local enforcement and decide what worked in their community. She emphasized that this legislation provides protections for tenants who cannot undertake property repairs themselves, but who deserve to live in safe conditions.

**Raymond Hinds** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing his experience in an apartment building that had a pipe burst due to poor maintenance, that destroyed 2 of his neighbor's apartments. He noted that the landlord attempted to continue collecting rent payments though they were effectively rendered homeless from the damage to their units. He stated that landlord accountability is sorely needed today as cities contain slums where housing conditions are reminiscent of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He expressed that landlords have no incentive to take care of the issues as the current laws state that they can

just issue a nonrenewal notice and the tenants will have to move out without proper resolution of repairs taking place.

**Braedyn Inmon** submitted testimony in support of this legislation noting that municipalities should have to the power to prohibit rent increases regardless of status of building code violations, but especially in the case of multiple building code violations.

**Connecticut Fair Housing Center, Sarah White, Attorney** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing that landlords who do not provide safe and healthy housing to their tenants and repeatedly violate public safety laws should not be able to demand higher rents from tenants who are not getting the bare minimum of a safe place to live. She noted that the center has seen many landlords demand rent increases from tenants even as the municipality is actively fining the landlord for ongoing code violations in the same building. She pointed out two recent incidents in Rocky Hill and Norwalk where tenants were left displaced. She emphasizes that housing code enforcement that is well resourced and well equipped with necessary tools to hold property owners accountable for making repairs is one of the primary strategies to improve the quality of housing and overall conditions of neighborhoods. They express that municipalities need more tools to compel landlords to follow health and safety laws and properly maintain their properties.

The following submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing that they have been displaced since January 31<sup>st</sup> due to frozen and burst pipes, loss of heat and hot water, and the condemnation of residential buildings. They share that they have lived in their apartment for over 10 years, and during that time their rent has increased by nearly \$1,000 per month. They express that with those increases, there is an expectation of improved maintenance, infrastructure, and safety. They shared that they got collapsed ceilings, pipes burst, buildings condemned, and residents forced into hotels. They pointed out that residents continued to be billed for utilities and services for homes they were not able to occupy. They stated that housing should not be more expensive while becoming less safe. They emphasized that rent increases should reflect improved conditions. They shared that accountability must exist on both sides, and that this bill does not punish responsible landlords, it would protect residents from paying escalating rents while living in deteriorating conditions:

**Anonymous**  
**Anonymous**

The following submitted testimony in general support of the bill:

**Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, Claudette Kidd, Client Engagement Specialist**  
**Connecticut Legal Services, Podolsky, Raphael, Attorney and Policy Advocate**  
**Anonymous**

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Simon Brecher** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that when landlords cannot manage risk, fewer tenants are approved, properties go unimproved, and housing becomes harder to find. He stated that while well-intentioned this legislation may end up hurting tenants the most.

**Menachem Dietsch** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation noting that it shifts too much risk onto housing providers and will ultimately reduce the availability of quality rental units in the state. They stated that this legislation would create unintended consequences that discourages responsible investment and property maintenance. They noted that many landlords are small business owners, not large corporations, and policies that reduce financial safeguards will make it harder to maintain properties, reinvest in improvements, and keep housing stock available.

**Ralph Harris** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that the most effective way to increase affordable housing in the state is to enact laws that would remove the risk for landlords. He shared that the less risk associated with being a landlord, the more people will be willing to purchase investment properties and supply will increase, thereby lowering rents. He noted that this legislation will force landlords to tighten their criteria for approving applicants to mitigate the risk of not being able to get rid of a bad tenant. He expressed that individuals with less than perfect credit need someone to take a chance on them and by enacting restrictive laws, landlords will be less likely to take that chance.

**Cue Residential, David Klein** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing his agreement that a property manager should not have a property with multiple violations. However, he stated that this legislation is too broad and misses the fact that sometimes a manager doesn't know, or the tenant will not the landlord in to correct issues.

**Shulem Perl** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that while it is well-intentioned it can create additional restriction on housing providers that will reduce housing availability and ultimately hurt tenants. He added that when landlords face increased regulation, financial uncertainty, or limitations on how they manage risk, many small property owners reconsider staying in the rental market. He said that some sell, some convert properties, some stop improving units, but it all results in fewer rental units available and with a decrease in supply, prices rise. He noted that this legislation can increase operating costs, increase risk, and discourage responsible investment in housing. He expressed that the state needs more housing, not fewer incentives to provide it, and if legislation unintentionally pushes small and mid-sized landlords out of the market, tenants will face tighter supply, reduced choice, and higher overall costs.

**Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut, Inc., Jim Perras, CEO** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that it fails to distinguish between legacy code conditions and true life-safety violations, which allows routine or technical code issues to trigger rent-increase prohibitions that are disproportionate and counterproductive. He stated that this approach risks discouraging reinvestment in older housing stock, and property owners rely on rental income to fund repairs, upgrades, and voluntary modernization. He shared that freezing rent increases due to code issues can deprive owners of the financial capacity needed to improve properties and bring them closer to current best practices. He noted that this legislation conflates building code compliance with rent regulation in a way that will slow rehabilitation, deter investment, and ultimately reduce housing quality and availability.

**Gabrielle Peters** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation stating that it could inadvertently discourage investment in rental housing, burden small landlords with disproportionate penalties, and ultimately reduce the supply of affordable units. She stated

that this legislation overlooks violations that stem from tenant-caused damage, aging infrastructure, or disputes over responsibility, not landlord negligence. She added that small landlords operate on thin margins and often invest in repairs promptly, but prohibiting rent adjustments could trap those owners in financial shortfalls, making it harder to fund ongoing maintenance or upgrades. Gabrielle expressed that this legislation risks uneven enforcement across municipalities, which creates a patchwork of regulations that deters investors and buyers. She stated that instead of promoting safety this legislation could result in fewer available rentals, higher overall rents, and increased homelessness as supply shrinks. She pointed out the need for collaborative solutions, such as incentives for compliance or streamlined dispute resolution, not punitive measure that penalize providers without addressing root causes.

**Rick Poulin** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that additional compliance obligations increases administrative issues and costs. He adds that for smaller landlords, those burdens can make continued participation in the rental market less viable. He noted that reduced predictability can also create financial uncertainty, particularly when mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and maintenance costs remain fixed. He stated that financial risks are shifting to housing providers. Rick pointed out that while well-intentioned, overly restrictive policies may discourage small property owners from offering units for rent. He shares that there is a need for balanced policy and that tenant protections and landlord rights are not opposing goals. He continues stating that a stable rental market requires enforceable lease agreements, timely dispute resolution, and shared accountability.

**Jacob Rocco** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation noting that it will ultimately harm the people it seeks to help. He stated that removing tools that limit a landlord's ability to manage risk responsibly makes small landlords more cautious and less flexible in tenant selection. He said that it may incentivize small landlords to sell to larger companies. Jacob expressed that the likely result is a more difficult rental market, with stricter screening standards and fewer opportunities for tenants who need flexibility the most. He notes that not every landlord is a large, wealthy operator and advises the committee to reject or significantly modify the legislation.

**Jorge Rodriguez** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation noting his concerns that restricting revenue may make it harder for property owners to finance needed repairs and deferred maintenance could worsen building conditions rather than improve them. He noted that tenants may remain in substandard housing longer if owners lack the financial capacity to make repairs.

**Joshua Schecter** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation pointing out that if landlords cannot protect their investment, there is a higher likelihood of stricter screening, approving fewer tenants, and avoiding improvements, which will lead to fewer options and higher barriers for tenants.

**CT Coalition of Property Owners, John Souza, President** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that towns have the tools necessary to penalize housing providers who do not cooperate with violation orders. He implores the committee not to complicate the business any further, as it will add to the price of rents eventually.

**Yong Yan** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that tenants will weapon code enforcement to prevent, or resist rent increases, regardless of continuous increases of property taxes, insurance, water and sewer, materials, labor costs, etc. He noted that some tenants intentionally damage property to create code enforcement violations. He stated that people will not invest in residential properties and affordable housing will become scarcer.

**Bo Yang, PHD** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that it fails to distinguish tenant-caused damage from owner negligence. Bo noted that this legislation also presents a lack of due process as owners are financially penalized immediately, even when repairs are underway or when violations are later dismissed or attributed to tenant behavior. He stated that tenants who damage units or allow conditions to deteriorate gain financial leverage over property owners and responsible tenants subsidize irresponsible behavior, and landlords are discouraged from renting to higher-risk households. Bo noted that this legislation would have a disproportionate impact on small landlords and older properties. He expressed that when rent adjustments are restricted, landlord must offset increased risk by raising rents preemptively, reducing maintenance spending, or exiting the rental market. He pointed out that this will lead to a reduction in housing supply and increase costs for all renters. He suggests a more balanced approach would exclude tenant-caused violations, apply rent limits only after violations are final and uncorrected, provide safe harbor for owners actively making repairs, and preserve due process protections.

**Debra** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that this legislation expands tenant protections in ways that shift additional risk and liability onto housing providers. She stated that landlords need clear rules, predictable timelines, and enforceable lease agreements. She emphasized that when enforcement becomes uncertain, lease agreements lose meaning, and that uncertainty increases costs and discourages responsible property ownership.

**Anonymous** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing the ramifications associated with it. They state that this legislation can create financial barriers which can reduce cash flow needed to make necessary repairs, delay correction of violations, and discourage reinvestment in aging buildings. They add that repairs are expensive and if that income is frozen, then funds needed to correct violations would become available, potentially prolonging non-compliance. They shared that not all violations are created equal, and that the legislation does not distinguish between minor infractions and serious life-safety hazards. They continue noting that freezing rents due to minor or technical violations create disproportionate penalties and legal uncertainty. They expressed that this legislation would also incentivize strategic complaints during renewal periods. They stated that even when repairs are underway, an open violation on record could be used to prevent lawful rent adjustments, which could turn the code enforcement system into a rent control mechanism rather than a safety enforcement tool. They emphasized that this legislation discourages investment in older properties, and that municipal discretion could lead to inconsistency and unpredictability. Which could discourage capital investment. They shared that there are safer alternatives like accelerated inspection timelines, clear deadlines for correction, tiered penalties for serious life-safety violations, grants, or low-interest loans to support rehabilitation, and strong enforcement on repeat bad actors.

**Anonymous** submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that each new requirement, adds time, cost, and uncertainty to operating a rental property. They note that larger operators may be able to absorb that cost, but smaller operators cannot. They noted that there is a financial risk that shifts heavily onto the housing providers and overtime can discourage investment, reduce upkeep, or load some owners to leave the rental market. They advise the legislature to consider not only the intent of the bills, but also the combined impact on housing stability and supply.

The following submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation stating that landlords should be held accountable for structural and maintenance issues within their control, but it is important to distinguish between owner negligence and tenant-caused damage:

**Matis Dier**

**Connecticut Real Estate Community, Moshe Goldstein, Member**

**Shuly Lieber**

**Tara Ramlal**

**Tzvee Rotberg**

**Nikoll Selca**

**Peter Sosnow**

**Abraham Steinmetz**

The following submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing permitting municipalities to prohibit rent increases based on code violations creates a "moral hazard". They stated that if a tenant causes damage that leads to a violation, they should not be rewarded with a rent freeze:

**Anonymous**

**Anonymous**

The following submitted general opposition to the bill:

**Chip Banker**

**Joseph Braunstein**

**Freedom Property LLC, Luke Florian, Member**

**Daniel S**

**Manny Santos**

**Anonymous**

**Platinum Realty Group, LLC., Anonymous**

**Anonymous**

The following submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing that it does not distinguish between landlord-caused violations and tenant-caused damage. He adds that penalizing housing providers without establishing fault will discourage renting older properties and increase litigation, not safety:

**Anonymous**

**Anonymous**

The following submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation sharing penalizing landlords for code violations caused by tenants is unfair and unsustainable. They noted if a tenant causes damage, the landlord should not be punished by not being able to adjust rents to cover necessary repairs. They shared the bill makes them hesitant to rent to tenants, which could further reduce housing availability:

**Shimon Handelsman**

**Levi Judgin**

**White Oak Buildings, Rachel Meyer, Owner**

**David Patel, Landlord**

**David Patel, Small Landlord**

**David Patel**

**Isaac Schwartz**

**Reported by: Tyler Fisher**

**Date: 03/20/2026**