



February 7, 2022

Testimony in support of extending Executive Order 12D

I am writing to offer my testimony in support of extending the protections against eviction provided in **Executive Order 12D**. My name is Jennifer Steadman, and I am the Executive Director of the Aurora Women and Girls Foundation that serves Greater Hartford. I am a resident of West Hartford.

The Aurora Women and Girls Foundation was one of the funders of the [*Essential Equity: Women, Covid-19 and Rebuilding Connecticut*](#) report published in January 2021 that showed the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on women, and particularly on women of color, across areas of health, economic security, child care, housing, mental health, safety, and hunger. The crisis-level conditions we found around housing instability have not significantly improved:

- 19% of females felt no confidence in their ability to pay their rent or mortgage the following month
- 20% of Black females were estimated to be behind on their rent or mortgage
- Despite the eviction moratorium, since the start of pandemic, landlords had filed over 2,500 new eviction cases

We were so concerned about the needs for safe, stable housing, particularly for single-female headed households in Greater Hartford, that we convened a community listening session in June 2021 to hear from single moms who were currently enrolled in community college and were concerned about the cost of housing. We heard from women working 2-3 jobs to keep their children in housing while they were also taking classes and trying to secure higher paying jobs. If they had an eviction on their record, even if they had won their case, they could not move to better housing.

Aurora was so concerned about what we heard, we partnered with Connecticut Data Collaborative and the CT Fair Housing Center to produce data on who in Connecticut is actually being evicted. The answer was that communities of color and women of color in particular are being evicted at disproportionate rates. The full report, [*“Exposing Connecticut’s Eviction Crisis: Understanding the Intersection of Race and Sex on Housing Instability in Connecticut,”*](#) provides data for the first time on the race and sex of those being evicted:

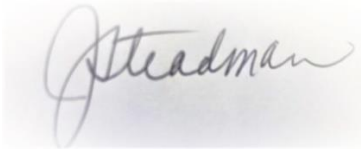
- 56% of Eviction Cases were filed against Female Headed Households
- **62% of eviction filings for Black and 59% of eviction filings for Latino householders were against those headed by females.**
- From 2017 to 2021, Black households were **over three times more likely** than white households to have an eviction case filed against them, and Latino households were **over two times more likely** than white households.

This new research makes it clear that eviction in Connecticut goes beyond segregation and structural inequity and is a civil rights issue, as it perpetuates economic violence against Black and Hispanic families in housing, with enduring ramifications.

I urge the legislature to extend the protections offered in Executive Order 12D, because while they may only offer extremely limited assistance and protection for women and their families facing eviction, the protections are sorely needed. Any measures that can prevent women and their families from losing their shelter and suffering the prolonged economic impacts of eviction and homelessness is the least we can do as the pandemic continues to threaten the health and livelihoods of our most vulnerable citizens. If these women and their families do become unhoused, the costs for services from the state have been estimated as up to \$1.2 billion for Connecticut (*Essential Equity*).

Thank you for considering my testimony as you make your decision on extending Executive Order 12D.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "JSteadman", written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Jennifer Steadman, Ph.D.

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