



Legislative Testimony
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**Testimony Supporting House Bill 6889, An Act Concerning Evictions for
Cause**

Hello Senator Marx and Representative Felipe and all the members of the Housing Committee.

My name is William Roberts, I am a resident of Hartford and a Smart Justice Leader with the ACLU of Connecticut. I am here in support of HB 6889, An Act Concerning Evictions for Cause and HB 6948, An Act Concerning the Collateral Consequences of Criminal Records on Housing Opportunities. I am going to direct most of my testimony to HB 6889.

First off, I would like to say that housing is not just a basic need, but a human right. As of right now the list of requirements just to get access to housing has increased over the years with very little oversight on the impact it is causing. From extreme rent increases forcing out low wage hard working people, to people forking over hundreds of dollars a month in credit background checks and criminal histories. In some of these cases charges that show no disposition, even if those charges are dismissed.

Last year I worked as a Residential Operations Supervisor at a shelter in New Britain. Once a resident was filled with anxiety after a charge popped on their credit report. Even though this person's charge was dropped after two weeks, they had to explain to the potential landlord why it was even there. Other residents were also facing an uphill battle due to prior criminal records. From getting jobs, to not being able to afford rent prices after they do find one, to getting discriminated

against because of a criminal history even after finding an apartment they can actually afford.

For people fortunate to have an apartment and who have paid their rent and been responsible tenants, their landlords should not have the power to evict them without cause. Evictions devastate and destabilize our communities. Just Cause Eviction Protection is a tool that Connecticut must implement to stop the destructive impact of no-fault evictions.

I lived in a apartment in Hartford for 13 years. I witnessed first-hand unjustified rent increases year after year, including multiple increases in a single year when a new landlord took over the building. When I requested maintenance to repair a broken window during the winter, it took weeks to fix. Last summer, after finally sick of yet another rent increase, I made the decision to purchase my own home. It was an enormous challenge for me to become a homeowner, but a relief to know I have a locked-in mortgage for the next 20 years and that I will be able to personally address any issues in my home myself.

I urge the members of the Housing Committee to support HB 6889 and HB 6948 and put people over business interests. Thank you for listening to my testimony.