Legislative Testimony

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**Written Testimony Supporting SB 143, An Act Concerning Just Cause Evictions**

Senator Moore, Representative Khan, Ranking Members Senator Sampson and Representative Scott, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Manuel Sandoval, I am a member of the ACLU-CT Smart Justice Campaign, and I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 143, An Act Concerning Just Cause Evictions.

Housing discrimination, redlining, racism, oppression, exclusionary tactics, and segregation have been pervasive issues in American history that have had long-lasting impacts on the disenfranchised, disconnected and marginalized communities. The discriminatory practices and policies implemented through redlining and housing segregation have perpetuated inequalities, restricted access to housing opportunities, and exacerbated economic disparities for minority populations. These injustices have undermined the fundamental human rights to safe, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing for all people.

I ask this committee, are we really going to continue to be on the wrong side of history forever? Things are changing. The time is now that we start to change history and the status quo. We must correct the errors of those that came before us by saying no to racism, exclusion, and outright greed. We must end the abuse of our fellow man by saying yes to affordable housing and human rights. We must put a stop to letting the greed of corporate America and well-off individuals destroy the fabric of families and neighborhoods, destroyed by those who see an opportunity to revert to segregation, redlining and gentrification through the veil of inflation.

Throughout history, marginalized communities, particularly African American, Latino and other communities of color, have faced systemic barriers to accessing quality housing due to discriminatory practices and policies. Redlining systematically denied mortgage loans and housing opportunities to people based on their race or ethnicity, reinforced segregation, concentrated poverty, and limited upward mobility for minority groups in cities across the United States, including in here in Connecticut.

Given this historical context, it is evident that housing is indeed a human rights issue that warrants comprehensive legislative support. Access to safe, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing is a fundamental human right that fosters social equity, promotes economic stability, and enhances overall well-being for individuals and communities. Legislation like SB 143 would help by limiting the “just because” attitude that is ruining families, increasing homelessness, and devasting communities. Your support SB 143 would help address housing discrimination, promote fair housing practices, and combat the new redlining and segregation tactic. Your support is essential to rectifying historical injustices, advancing social justice, and ensuring that all individuals have equal opportunities to secure housing and thrive in inclusive communities.

Your support would build upon this foundation and continue legislative efforts to address systemic inequalities, dismantle discriminatory barriers, and promote equitable access to housing as a human right and advance social justice for all people. By supporting legislation that aims to combat housing discrimination, redlining, racism, and segregation, we can work towards creating inclusive, diverse, and thriving communities where everyone has the opportunity to access safe and affordable housing without fear of discrimination or exclusion based on race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics.

Just cause eviction protections are a common-sense policy that confronts our housing affordability crisis head-on by preventing wrongful evictions and promoting housing stability. Everyone deserves access to safe and affordable housing, including justice- impacted people. The ACLU-CT strongly supports Senate Bill 143 and encourages this Committee to do the same.