

Planning and Development Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1317

AN ACT CONCERNING LIENS FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE HOUSING CODE

Title: OR PUBLIC PLACE ORDINANCES.

Vote Date: 3/7/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/19/2025

File No.: 208

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

To ensure that municipalities have a strong and effective way to enforce penalties for violations related to blight, unsafe housing conditions, or improper use of public spaces. By making unpaid penalties a lien on the property, municipalities are provided a legal mechanism to secure payment for these penalties. The lien priority over other claims, except taxes, ensures that municipalities can enforce compliance and maintain public safety and quality of life in their communities. It also encourages property owners to address violations promptly to avoid the financial consequences of a lien being placed on their property.

The Substitute Language removes Section 1. Section 7-148aa of the general statutes and replaces it requiring the maintenance of safe and sanitary housing and adopted pursuant to subparagraph (A) (i) of subdivision (7) of subsection (c) of section 7-148.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Liam Brennan, Executive Director, Livable City Initiative:](#) Currently, housing code violations require an additional court filing, creating unnecessary delays and administrative burdens. The proposed bill would allow unpaid fines for housing code violations to automatically become property liens, just as with blight violations, after due process, eliminating redundant court filings and speeding up enforcement. However, the bill needs a technical adjustment to reference the correct statutes for housing code and public space violations to ensure its effectiveness. The proposed change would improve efficiency and consistency in enforcement while maintaining protections for property owners.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Christopher Gelino](#): He highlights how tenants often struggle to get landlords to address issues like pest infestations, mold, and insufficient heat or hot water. While the housing court process can provide remedies, such as rent abatements, it often doesn't force landlords to make repairs. Some landlords, especially large corporations, may not even show up to court, leaving tenants with few options but to move out, only for the landlord to rent the property to someone else. The bill proposes creating liens on properties with unpaid housing code enforcement fines, which would make it harder for negligent landlords to avoid accountability by transferring properties to new LLCs. This would help improve housing conditions and tenants' quality of life across the state.

[Martin M. Looney, Connecticut General Assembly, State Senator](#): " Currently, under Connecticut General Statute Section 7-148aa, an unpaid penalty imposed by a municipality under an ordinance that regulates blight constitutes a lien upon the real estate against which the penalty was imposed. This bill would add ordinances that require the maintenance of safe and sanitary housing or that regulate the use of any public place to the list of unpaid violations that would constitute a lien. This legislation would provide an additional tool for municipalities that are seeking to rein in abusive landlords and to ensure that tenants will be provided safe and healthy housing."

[Eli Sabin, Legislative Coordinator, Connecticut Voices for Children](#): This would help municipalities penalize noncompliant landlords, particularly absentee ones, who are often difficult to track down for fines. By placing a lien on the property, the fine would be paid when the property is sold, ensuring the landlord is held accountable. The bill aims to improve tenant health and safety and encourage landlords to comply with housing codes.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Austin Adil

Date: 3/21/25