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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sHB 6890**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill makes several changes to the Department of Housing's (DOH) Rental Assistance Program (RAP; see BACKGROUND), including the following:

1. establishes in statute the amount of time a RAP participant initially has to find qualifying housing;
2. creates statutory requirements related to housing unit inspections under the program, including specific inspection timeframes;
3. authorizes DOH to adopt regulations for electronic signatures and document submissions; and
4. eliminates current law's requirement that DOH administer the program to promote housing choice for certificate holders and encourage racial and economic integration.

It also makes various minor, technical, and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

#### **CHANGES TO RAP PROCEDURES**

##### ***Issuance of Rental Assistance Certificates***

By law, DOH issues rental assistance certificates to eligible households it selects to participate in RAP (i.e. certificate holders). The bill gives certificate holders up to one year, from the date a certificate is issued, to find housing under the program. It allows DOH to extend a newly issued certificate's effective period for an additional 180 days for good cause. (It is unclear if this provision applies to current certificates

or just to prospective ones issued after the bill's effective date.)

Current program regulations require certificate holders to enter into an approved rental agreement within 90 days but allow DOH or its agent to extend a certificate's expiration up to 90 days (i.e. 180 days total). This 180-day maximum can be further extended if the department finds good cause to do so (Conn. Agencies Regs., § 17b-812-5). (DOH's RAP Administrative Plan states that a special extension beyond the 180-day maximum may be granted if there are documented and verified circumstances that (1) are beyond a family's control and (2) affect the family's ability to find suitable housing.)

### ***Housing Unit Inspections***

Under the bill, any DOH-required initial housing unit eligibility inspection must be done within five business days after a certificate holder submits a request for tenancy approval to the department. The bill requires DOH to (1) send a written notice with the inspection date to both the unit owner and certificate holder and (2) do re-inspections, following a failed initial inspection due to defects in the unit, within three business days after the unit owner certifies in writing to the department that the defects have been corrected.

### ***Electronic Signatures and Documents***

The bill authorizes DOH to adopt regulations for electronic signatures or document submissions (e.g., applications, approvals, reports, or other agreements required for RAP administration). It requires the department to accept electronic signatures and document submissions until it adopts the related regulations. (The bill does not specify a process for doing so.)

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***RAP***

RAP is a state-funded program that helps very low-income families afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Recipients of RAP certificates may choose any private rental housing that meets program requirements.

**Related Bills**

sSB 12 (§§ 9 & 10), reported favorably by the Housing Committee, appropriates to DOH from the General Fund for FY 26 (1) \$4.2 million for at least 425 additional rental assistance certificates for the Elderly Rental Assistance Program and (2) \$4.5 million for at least 275 additional RAP certificates for families participating in the Head Start program.

sHB 6941, reported favorably by the Housing Committee, requires DOH's regulations on RAP income eligibility to exempt from the program's gross income calculation up to \$100,000 in annual income earned by any child who is under age 24 and lives with the applicant.

sHB 7112 (§§ 15 & 18), reported favorably by the Housing Committee, requires DOH to create a pilot program providing direct rental assistance to up to 150 households that are eligible for a RAP certificate and are also on a waiting list for the federal Housing Choice Voucher program; it appropriates \$2.23 million to DOH from the General Fund for FY 26 in support of the program.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Housing Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    18    Nay   0    (03/06/2025)