



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 107

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5258

House of Representatives, March 23, 2026

The Committee on Housing reported through REP. FELIPE of the 130th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING TENANT ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 47a-1 of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes
2 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
3 *October 1, 2026*):

4 As used in this chapter, sections 47a-21, 47a-23 to 47a-23c, inclusive,
5 47a-26a to 47a-26g, inclusive, 47a-35 to 47a-35b, inclusive, 47a-41a, 47a-
6 43 and 47a-46 and section 2 of this act:

7 (1) "Action" includes recoupment, counterclaim, set-off, cause of
8 action and any other proceeding in which rights are determined,
9 including an action for possession.

10 (2) "Building and housing codes" include any law, ordinance or
11 governmental regulation concerning fitness for habitation or the
12 construction, maintenance, operation, occupancy, use or appearance of
13 any premises or dwelling unit.

14 (3) "Dwelling unit" means any house or building, or portion thereof,
15 which is occupied, is designed to be occupied, or is rented, leased or
16 hired out to be occupied, as a home or residence of one or more persons.

17 (4) "Landlord" means the owner, lessor or sublessor of the dwelling
18 unit, the building of which it is a part or the premises.

19 (5) "Owner" means one or more persons, jointly or severally, in whom
20 is vested (A) all or part of the legal title to property, or (B) all or part of
21 the beneficial ownership and a right to present use and enjoyment of the
22 premises and includes a mortgage in possession.

23 (6) "Person" means an individual, corporation, limited liability
24 company, the state or any political subdivision thereof, or agency,
25 business trust, estate, trust, partnership or association, two or more
26 persons having a joint or common interest, and any other legal or
27 commercial entity.

28 (7) "Premises" means a dwelling unit and the structure of which it is
29 a part and facilities and appurtenances therein and grounds, areas and
30 facilities held out for the use of tenants generally or whose use is
31 promised to the tenant.

32 (8) "Rent" means all periodic payments to be made to the landlord
33 under the rental agreement.

34 (9) "Rental agreement" means all agreements, written or oral, and
35 valid rules and regulations adopted under section 47a-9 or subsection
36 (d) of section 21-70 embodying the terms and conditions concerning the
37 use and occupancy of a dwelling unit or premises.

38 (10) "Roomer" means a person occupying a dwelling unit, which unit
39 does not include a refrigerator, stove, kitchen sink, toilet and shower or
40 bathtub and one or more of these facilities are used in common by other
41 occupants in the structure.

42 (11) "Single-family residence" means a structure maintained and used
43 as a single dwelling unit. Notwithstanding that a dwelling unit shares

44 one or more walls with another dwelling unit or has a common parking
45 facility, it is a single-family residence if it has direct access to a street or
46 thoroughfare and does not share heating facilities, hot water equipment
47 or any other essential facility or service with any other dwelling unit.

48 (12) "Tenant" means the lessee, sublessee or person entitled under a
49 rental agreement to occupy a dwelling unit or premises to the exclusion
50 of others or as is otherwise defined by law.

51 (13) "Tenement house" means any house or building, or portion
52 thereof, which is rented, leased or hired out to be occupied, or is
53 arranged or designed to be occupied, or is occupied, as the home or
54 residence of three or more families, living independently of each other,
55 and doing their cooking upon the premises, and having a common right
56 in the halls, stairways or yards.

57 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2026*) (a) As used in this section:

58 (1) "Tenant organizer" means an individual who (A) assists tenants in
59 establishing and operating a tenant organization or in organizing
60 tenants to address the affairs of such dwelling unit or other dwelling
61 units owned or managed by the owner of the dwelling unit or the
62 owner's agents, and (B) is not an employee or agent of such dwelling
63 unit's current or prospective owners, managers or agents.

64 (2) "Tenant organization" means an organization that (A) is
65 established by tenants of a dwelling unit or of multiple dwelling units
66 owned or managed by the same owner or owner's agent; (B) is
67 established for the purpose of addressing issues related to the tenants'
68 living environment, including the terms and conditions of their tenancy
69 as well as activities related to housing and community development; (C)
70 meets regularly; and (D) operates independently from the authority of
71 the owner of such dwelling units and the owner's agents.

72 (b) An owner of any dwelling unit, except those exempted from the
73 application of title 47a of the general statutes pursuant to section 47a-2
74 of the general statutes, and any agents of such owner, shall permit

75 tenants, tenants' authorized agents and tenant organizers who are
76 accompanied by tenants to conduct the following activities related to the
77 establishment or operation of a tenant organization, provided such
78 activities are conducted in a reasonable manner and in compliance with
79 all applicable law:

- 80 (1) Distributing leaflets in common areas, including lobby areas;
- 81 (2) Placing leaflets at or under tenants' doors;
- 82 (3) Initiating contact with tenants;
- 83 (4) Conducting door-to-door surveys of tenants to ascertain interest
84 in establishing a tenant organization, to offer information about existing
85 tenant organizations or to offer information about the legal rights of
86 tenants;
- 87 (5) Posting information on bulletin boards, provided such postings
88 comply with the requirements of subsection (d) of this section;
- 89 (6) Assisting tenants in participating in tenant organization activities;
- 90 (7) Holding meetings, including political caucuses or forums for
91 speeches of public officials or candidates for public office, without the
92 presence of the dwelling unit's owner or such owner's agent, conducted
93 at reasonable times and in an orderly manner on the premises, held in
94 any community room or recreation room, if such rooms are open for the
95 use of tenants, or in common areas, including, but not limited to,
96 laundry rooms, hallways and lobbies, if a community or recreation room
97 is not available; and
- 98 (8) Performing other reasonable and lawful activities related to the
99 establishment or operation of a tenant organization.

100 (c) The owner of a dwelling unit or the agent of such owner shall not
101 require tenants, tenants' authorized agents or tenant organizers to
102 obtain prior permission before engaging in activities described in
103 subsection (b) of this section, except that the owner may apply such

104 owner's generally applicable rules governing advance reservation of
105 community or recreation rooms.

106 (d) Any owner who issues generally applicable rules governing the
107 use of bulletin boards by tenants or other displays of information in
108 common areas may not specifically exclude the posting of information
109 related to tenant organizing activities if the rules permit posting of other
110 types of information by tenants.

111 Sec. 3. Section 47a-20 of the general statutes is repealed and the
112 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

113 (a) A landlord shall not maintain an action or proceeding against a
114 tenant to recover possession of a dwelling unit, demand an increase in
115 rent from the tenant, or decrease the services to which the tenant has
116 been entitled within six months after: (1) The tenant has in good faith
117 attempted to remedy by any lawful means, including contacting
118 officials of the state or of any town, city or borough or public agency or
119 filing a complaint with a fair rent commission, any condition
120 constituting a violation of any provisions of chapter 368o, or of chapter
121 412, or of any other state statute or regulation, or of the housing and
122 health ordinances of the municipality wherein the premises which are
123 the subject of the complaint lie; (2) any municipal agency or official has
124 filed a notice, complaint or order regarding such a violation; (3) the
125 tenant has in good faith requested the landlord to make repairs; (4) the
126 tenant has in good faith instituted an action under subsections (a) to (i),
127 inclusive, of section 47a-14h; or (5) the tenant has organized or become
128 a member of a tenants' union, other than the activities specified in
129 section 2 of this act.

130 (b) A landlord shall not maintain an action or proceeding against a
131 tenant to recover possession of a dwelling unit or decrease the services
132 to which the tenant has been entitled within four months after the tenant
133 has participated in any of the activities described in section 2 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2026	47a-1
Sec. 2	October 1, 2026	New section
Sec. 3	October 1, 2026	47a-20

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 2(c), "community space" was changed to "community or recreation rooms" for consistency.

HSG *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
All Municipalities	Potential Savings	Minimal	Minimal

Explanation

The bill adds circumstances under which eviction is prohibited. This may result in a potential minimal savings to municipalities beginning in FY 27 associated with storing less possessions of evicted tenants to the extent the bill results in fewer evictions.

The court system disposes of over 20,000 housing summary process cases annually, and the number of cases is not anticipated to be great enough to need additional resources.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to actual number of evictions.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5258*****AN ACT CONCERNING TENANT ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES.*****SUMMARY**

The bill requires residential rental property owners to allow certain on-site tenant organization and tenant organizing activities. The bill extends, with limitations, current law's protections against certain retaliatory actions by landlords to cover tenants engaging in these protected activities.

The bill applies to property owners subject to the state's landlord tenant laws and their agents. (Under existing law and the bill, certain rental arrangements are not covered by these laws, including dormitories, transient lodgings, and nursing homes.) The bill generally requires these covered owners and agents ("landlords") to let tenant organizers and tenants and their agents engage in on-site activities related to establishing or operating a tenant organization, if they are done in a reasonable manner and conform with any applicable law. Under the bill, these activities include helping tenants participate in tenant organization activities, distributing leaflets, contacting tenants to share information on their legal rights, and holding meetings in common areas (see below).

Under the bill, a "tenant organization" is established by tenants that share the same landlord to address issues related to their living environment (including terms and conditions of tenancy and activities related to housing and community development). A tenant organization must meet regularly and operate independently from the landlord and their agents. (While some local ordinances specify a process for recognizing duly organized tenant organizations, state law does not require tenants to follow a specific process.)

Under federal regulations, similar but more comprehensive requirements apply to owners of certain federally supported multifamily properties, including certain properties supported by project-based Section 8 and the Section 202 supportive housing programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

PROTECTED TENANT ACTIVITIES

The bill identifies activities that landlords must allow tenant organizers and tenants and their agents to conduct related to establishing or operating a tenant organization. Under the bill, a “tenant organizer” is someone who (1) helps tenants establish and operate a tenant organization and (2) is not an employee or agent of a current or prospective landlord or their managers.

The covered protected activities are:

1. distributing leaflets in lobby and common areas, at or under tenants’ doors, and posting information on bulletin boards;
2. initiating contact with tenants, conducting door-to-door surveys to determine interest in establishing a tenant organization and offer information about tenant organizations or the legal rights of tenants;
3. helping tenants participate in tenant organization activities;
4. convening meetings and certain other events on-site, as described below; and
5. performing other reasonable and lawful activities related to establishing or operating a tenant organization.

The bill prohibits landlords from requiring prior permission before these activities, although a generally applicable rule on reserving community or recreation rooms in advance may still apply. If a landlord has generally applicable rules allowing tenants to post information on

bulletin boards or other displays in common areas, these rules cannot specifically prohibit posting information related to tenant organizing activities.

Under the bill, a tenant organizer must be accompanied by a tenant while conducting the above activities on a landlord's property.

On-Site Meetings

Regarding on-site meetings and events, the bill specifies that if they relate to establishing or operating a tenant organization and are conducted in a reasonable and orderly manner, at a reasonable time, and without violating any laws (like those on fire safety), these events:

1. must be allowed without the landlord's presence;
2. may include meetings, political caucuses, and forums for speeches of public officials or candidates for public office; and
3. may occur in (a) any community room or recreation room, if these rooms are generally open to tenants, or (b) in common areas like laundry rooms, hallways, and lobbies, if a community or recreation room is not available.

PROHIBITION ON RETALIATORY EVICTION OR DECREASE IN SERVICES

Current law prohibits landlords from taking certain retaliatory actions against tenants (see BACKGROUND). Under this law, among other things and with some exceptions, a landlord cannot maintain an eviction proceeding, increase rent, or decrease services for six months after a "tenant has organized" or "become of member of a tenants' union." The bill modifies this prohibition and adds additional protections related to the tenant activities described above.

The bill retains current law's prohibition on retaliation for having organized or joining a tenants' union. But it specifies that the organizing activities it newly protects (e.g., distributing leaflets or holding meetings about forming a tenants' organization) are subject to a narrower prohibition on retaliation. Under the bill, landlords cannot maintain an

eviction proceeding or decrease services for four months after the tenant participates in an activity the bill newly protects. This prohibition is (1) enforceable in the same way as the existing landlord retaliation law and (2) subject to the same exceptions.

BACKGROUND

Prohibited Retaliatory Actions

A landlord cannot maintain an eviction proceeding, increase rent, or decrease services for six months after a tenant takes certain actions, including (1) joining a tenants’ union or (2) making a good faith attempt to bring the dwelling into compliance with state or local laws and regulations (CGS § 47a-20). The law establishes certain exceptions, such as cases where the tenant does not pay rent or is using the dwelling unit for an illegal purpose (CGS § 47a-20a).

Among other means of enforcement, fair rent commissions may enforce these provisions by imposing fines (CGS §§ 7-148b & 7-148f).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Housing Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 12 Nay 6 (03/05/2026)