
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5261

AN ACT PERMITTING MUNICIPALITIES TO PROHIBIT RENT INCREASES IN THE EVENT OF MULTIPLE STATE BUILDING CODE VIOLATIONS.

SUMMARY

This bill grants municipal legislative bodies broad authority to adopt an ordinance prohibiting landlords from increasing the rent on a dwelling unit when the unit is subject to at least two violations of local ordinances on health and safety or the state building code. (Presumably, this means that an enforcement official has issued a notice, complaint, or order related to conditions in the specific unit.)

Any adopted ordinance will, presumably, specify how an affected landlord (1) will be notified that a unit is subject to a rent freeze for uncorrected violations and (2) can contest the freeze or otherwise have it lifted.

Under existing law, tenants subject to a fair rent commission's jurisdiction, as well as certain other tenants, can challenge their rent or a rent increase when their unit is in need of repairs or noncompliant with health and safety laws (see BACKGROUND).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

BACKGROUND

Fair Rent Commissions and Related Tenant Protections

Municipalities with a population of at least 15,000 must adopt an ordinance creating a fair rent commission, establishing or joining a joint fair rent commission, or joining a regional fair rent commission. Municipalities below this population threshold may opt to do so. By law, fair rent commissions are generally empowered to (1) control and eliminate excessive (i.e. harsh and unconscionable) rental charges and (2) enforce landlord-tenant statutes prohibiting landlord retaliation and

establishing eviction protections for certain protected tenants. Among other things, commissions may receive rent complaints and hold hearings on them. Commissions must consider certain factors, if applicable, when determining whether a rental charge or proposed rent increase is excessive to the point of being “harsh and unconscionable.” These factors include sanitary conditions, repairs necessary to make the accommodations livable, and compliance with state and local health and safety laws (CGS § 7-148b et seq.).

Relatedly, certain protected tenants who live in a municipality without a fair rent commission may bring action in Superior Court to contest an excessive rent increase or proposed increase. The tenants protected by this law are generally those who (1) live in a building with at least five separate units and (2) are age 62 or older or have a disability (CGS § 47a-23c).

Additionally, by law, rental agreements cannot allow landlords to receive rent payments for any period during which the landlord is noncompliant with their statutory responsibilities (CGS §§ 47a-4a & 47a-7(a)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Housing Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 6 (03/05/2026)