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## OLR Bill Analysis

### SB 274

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING NONRESIDENT LANDLORD REGISTRATION AND INCREASING PENALTIES FOR REPEAT BUILDING AND FIRE CODE VIOLATIONS.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires municipalities with a population of at least 25,000 based on the most recent decennial census (“covered municipalities”) to require certain residential property owners and landlords to report specified information to the municipality, such as their current residential address. Existing law allows, but does not require, all municipalities to do so. The bill also modifies the reporting requirement for these municipalities to include other identifying information for the owner, landlord, or agent in charge of the building. Under current law, the identifying information requirement applies only to certain people associated with a business entity that owns rental property.

The bill eliminates the infraction penalty for violating the reporting requirement and specifies that these violations are punishable according to municipal civil penalties authorized under existing law.

The bill adds complying with the modified reporting requirement to the law’s list of landlord responsibilities (§ 2). Under existing law, (1) rental agreements cannot allow landlords to receive rent payments for any period during which the landlord is noncompliant with these responsibilities (CGS § 47a-4a) and (2) a tenant who claims that the landlord failed to perform his or her legal duties may generally start an action in Superior Court to seek relief (CGS § 47a-14h).

The bill also sets increased fines for repeat violations of the State Building Code, the State Fire Prevention Code and Fire Safety Code, and certain written orders by building inspectors.

Lastly, it makes technical, conforming, and other minor changes, such

as specifying that the duties of agents in charge of a building include maintenance and ensuring the property complies with state and local codes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

## **§ 1 — MUNICIPAL LANDLORD IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Current law allows municipalities to require nonresident property owners and landlords renting to federal Housing Choice Voucher program participants (also known as “project-based housing providers” or PBHPs) to report certain information to the tax assessor or another designated municipal officer. This information must include the following:

1. the owner’s or PBHP’s current residential address, if they are an individual, or
2. the current residential address of (a) the agent in charge of the building and (b) each person who exercises day-to-day financial or operational control of the property (“controlling participants”), if the owner or PBHP is a business entity (a corporation, partnership, trust, or other legally recognized entity).

For business entities, this report must also include identifying information for the controlling participants.

### ***Identifying Information and Nonresident Owners***

Current law does not define “identifying information,” but under the bill it is proof of a person’s name, birthdate, current residential address, driver’s license number, or other government-issued identification number. The bill also defines “nonresident owner,” as a person or business entity that does not live at the rental property and is either (1) an owner (one or more people with legal title to the property or beneficial ownership and a right to present use and enjoyment of the premises, including mortgagees in possession) or (2) the controlling participant of the entity that owns the property (see above).

### ***Covered Municipalities***

Under the bill, covered municipalities must require nonresident property owners and PBHPs to report the information described above to them. For these municipalities, the bill also expands the reporting requirement to include accurate identifying information for the nonresident owner, PBHP, or agent in charge.

### ***FOIA Exemption***

Under current law, reports made to a tax assessor on or after October 1, 2023, are exempt from disclosure under the state's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The bill makes these reports exempt regardless of when they were made.

### ***Violations of Reporting Requirement***

Existing law allows municipalities to adopt an ordinance setting a civil penalty for violations of the reporting requirement discussed above. The penalty cannot exceed \$500 for a first violation and \$1,000 for subsequent violations. Anyone assessed a civil penalty may appeal to Superior Court (CGS § 47a-6b).

The bill eliminates an additional infraction penalty (see BACKGROUND – *Infractions*) for violations of the reporting requirement and instead specifies that these violations are punishable according to the civil penalty provision described above.

### **§§ 3-5 — PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN REPEAT CODE VIOLATIONS**

The bill sets increased fines for repeat violations of (1) the State Building Code; (2) the State Fire Prevention Code and Fire Safety Code; and (3) a building inspector's written order for providing additional exits, making repairs or alterations, or removing the building or a portion of it. The bill keeps current law's penalties for these violations for a first offense (a fine between \$200 and \$1,000, imprisonment up to six months, or both). Under the bill, the penalties for subsequent violations are as follows:

1. State Building Code or building inspector's written order: a fine between \$500 and \$2,000; and

2. State Fire Prevention Code and Fire Safety Code: a fine between \$500 and \$1,000.

Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, the fire code-related violations may also be subject to a fine of \$50 per day for each day the violation continues.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Infractions***

Infractions are punishable by fines, usually set by Superior Court judges, of between \$35 and \$90, plus a \$20 or \$35 surcharge and an additional fee based on the fine's amount. An infraction is not a crime, and violators can pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.

### ***Related Bills***

sHB 5161, reported favorably by the Housing Committee, has similar provisions to §§ 1 & 2. sSB 408, § 3, reported favorably by the Public Safety and Security Committee, has similar provisions to § 1.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/06/2026)