



**TESTIMONY FOR INFORMATIONAL HEARING ON THE CONTINUATION OF EMERGENCY
DECLARATIONS AND LIMITED EXECUTIVE ORDERS**

Jim Horan, Executive Director

LISC Connecticut

February 7, 2022

Testimony in Support of:

Executive Order 12D & Extension of Public Health Emergency

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of extension of Executive Order 12D. I am Jim Horan, Executive Director of the Connecticut program of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

LISC is a national community development organization that has worked in Connecticut since 1984. Our mission is to create resilient, inclusive communities: great places to live, work, do business, and raise families. Housing is a centerpiece of this work – families need safe and affordable homes in order for communities to thrive. Unfortunately, the health and financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges in keeping individuals and families housed safely and affordably over the past two years.

LISC is deeply concerned about the possible expiration of Executive Order 12D, which has protected tenants at risk of eviction by requiring that eligible tenants and their landlords seek relief for arrearages through the UniteCT program prior to moving forward with eviction. In addition, this order has also extended the notice to quit from a 3 to 30-day period.

As a result of Connecticut's strongest real estate market in a decade, coupled with stagnant development growth during this same time period, renters are finding it increasingly difficult to find housing, facing extreme competition, low inventory, and higher prices – and these are challenges facing renters with incomes at or above the area median income. For renters with low- and moderate-incomes, finding rental housing in the market at prices they can afford has become near impossible. Maintaining a 30-day period for notice to quit will be critical in ensuring tenants have the opportunity to line up alternative housing and keep individuals and families out of shelters.

Continuation of Executive Order 12D is also critical to protect those tenants whose applications to UniteCT have not yet been processed to ensure they have the opportunity to receive funding to cover their arrears and maintain housing. Despite the full amount of emergency rental assistance funding being committed, only half of it has been paid out. This represents over 25,000 renter households – 5% of total number of renter households in Connecticut – still waiting for relief. Additionally, Connecticut has applied for more funding from the federal government and it's possible this could be received to extend the reach of the UniteCT program.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation

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We respectfully request the Legislature retain Executive Order 12D, with the following modifications:

- Please modify the order to stay evictions of tenants with pending UniteCT completed applications until the landlord is paid (or the application is denied).
- Please preserve, for the duration of the payout period, the 30-day notice to quit with a right to cure.
- Please ensure that 12D requirements related to new applications should not be terminated, because UniteCT could receive further funding.

In addition, **LISC supports the extension of the Public Health Emergency declaration** to continue allowing FEMA funding to support non-congregate housing solutions. These federal dollars have provided a critical resource throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that our residents experiencing housing instability are able to remain safely housed and limit community spread of the virus.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of retaining Executive Order 12D, with modifications, and continuation of the Public Health Emergency declaration.