



House Bill 5161

AN ACT REQUIRING THE COLLECTION OF IDENTIFYING INFORMATION OF NONRESIDENT OWNERS OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

Testimony of The State Fire Marshal

Housing Committee

February 17, 2026

Senator Marx, Representative Felipe, Senator Sampson, Representative Scott, and distinguished members of the Housing Committee, my name is Lauri Volkert, and I serve as the State Fire Marshal. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 5161, which seeks to require municipalities to collect identifying information from nonresident owners and project-based housing providers of residential rental properties.

Why This Legislation Matters for Fire Safety

As fire officials, our mission is to protect lives and property through proactive measures, including annual inspections of multifamily residential buildings. These inspections are critical to ensuring that buildings remain reasonably compliant with fire and building codes. However, inspections alone are not enough. When violations are identified, timely communication and cooperation with property owners are essential to achieve code abatement and fire safety improvements.

Current Challenges

Too often, local fire code officials encounter situations where:

- The property owner is absent or unresponsive, making it difficult to address hazards promptly.
- Notices and orders are delayed or ignored because the municipality lacks accurate contact information for the responsible party.
- Tenants remain at risk because repairs and compliance measures stall due to poor communication channels.

How This Bill Helps

This legislation provides a practical solution by:

- Requiring nonresident owners and housing providers to register accurate identifying information and residential addresses with municipalities.

450 Columbus Boulevard | Hartford, CT 06103

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

- Ensuring that service of state or municipal orders to the address on file constitutes sufficient notice for enforcement actions.
- Establishing penalties for noncompliance, reinforcing accountability.

With these measures, fire marshals and local code officials can quickly reach decision-makers, expedite repairs, and reduce fire risks in multifamily housing.

Public Safety Impact

This bill strengthens our ability to:

- Prevent tragedies by addressing hazards before they lead to fires.
- Protect tenants, particularly in high-density housing where fire spread can be catastrophic.
- Support municipalities in enforcing building and fire codes effectively.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to advance House Bill 5161. By improving owner accountability and communication, we take a significant step toward safer housing and stronger fire prevention across Connecticut.