



Right to Housing Alliance

Hearing of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, January 28, 2021

Senate Bill 154 – Landlord and Tenant – Eviction Action – Right to Counsel

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members,

My name is Detrese, I'm currently the President of an organization called Right to Housing Alliance and I'm writing this testimony in favor of the Right to Counsel bill. We believe that this bill will help provide relief for tenants who face injustices in rent court. Being in this organization for years I have seen and worked with tenants who are afraid to face their landlord alone. I have also seen situations where if a tenant does defend themselves they aren't always given a fair shake in court even when there is evidence that the landlord is in the wrong. Tenants aren't given the opportunity to bring up a defense as to why their rent isn't paid. In some cases, it can be a situation where they are living in deplorable conditions without remediation from the landlord and bad accounting practices (which I went through as a tenant). When tenants feel their voices aren't being heard they often give up and feel what's the use the landlord will win anyway. But, with an attorney by their side it gives them a glimmer of hope that their voice is being heard.

Thank You

Detrese Dowridge

President/Leadership Council Member

Right to Housing Alliance

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