February 3, 2022

Governor Ned Lamont
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
210 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

Sen. Bob Duff
Senate Majority Leader
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

Rep. Jason Rojas
House Majority Leader
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

Sen. Martin Looney
President Pro Tempore
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

Rep. Matt Ritter
Speaker of the House
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

Sen. Kevin Kelly
Senate Republican Leader
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

Rep. Vincent Candelora
House Republican Leader
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Lamont and Leaders of the Connecticut General Assembly

We are writing to you with our concerns about the expiration of Executive Order 12D on February 15th, which puts the efficacy of the UniteCT program at risk. Existing EO 12D protections apply not only to new applicants, but also to tenants and landlords whose applications are pending. Since the Department of Housing (DOH) does not expect to finish disbursing the currently available UniteCT funds until this summer, we urge you to take action to make sure that those already in the process will not be evicted while awaiting processing of their applications.

As of today, almost all of the UniteCT budget has been committed, but almost half of it – nearly $200,000,000 -- has not yet been paid out. New applications are expected to be “paused” when the Governor’s emergency orders end on February 15th. The payout of UniteCT funds on behalf of those who applied before February 15th, however, is expected to extend until mid- to late-summer. Moreover, DOH has applied for additional federal funds and it is possible that a modest amount may yet be received before the program closes.

With this in mind, we urge that, by legislative action, EO 12D be retained or codified in modified form. We have supplied language to accomplish this. A few key components of this proposal include:

- **Pay the landlord and keep tenants in place:** It is vital to prevent landlords who will be paid under UniteCT from completing the eviction of a tenant while waiting for a UniteCT payment.
Therefore, Section 2(c) of our proposal stays evictions of tenants with pending UniteCT completed applications until the landlord is paid (or the application is denied). A paid landlord is required by UniteCT to withdraw the eviction.

**Suspend tenant protections tied to UniteCT applications rather than terminate them:** Based on what we have been told by the DOH, suspension of new applications is expected to occur on or about February 15th. Section 2(a) of our proposal maintains that 12D requirements related to new applications should not be terminated, because UniteCT may receive further funding, thus they may again become applicable. These protections should be suspended during periods when new applications are not being accepted and automatically spring back when applications are being accepted.

**Preserve 30-day duration of notice to quit:** Section 2(b) of our proposal would preserve, for the duration of the payout period, the 30-day notice to quit with a right to cure. Even without UniteCT, a 30-day cure period gives tenants with a small arrearage a chance to get caught up. For tenants who must vacate, whether the State of Emergency is formally extended or not, the reality is that the pandemic has made it extremely difficult for such evicted tenants to find a new apartment in a very short period of time. Early return to a 3-day notice to quit will be damaging to tenants.

**Sunset Provision:** Section 3 terminates the proposal when UniteCT has paid out all funds.

The language provided preserves the core purpose of UniteCT, which is to minimize the spread of COVID that results from the eviction of tenants, while paying landlords who are owed back rent. This approach also self-adapts to what is essentially a phase-out of the UniteCT program. It is keyed into two specific events for which the explicit dates are not yet known: (1) the date that UniteCT stops accepting applications and (2) the date that all UniteCT payments have been made. Thus, the relevant provisions of EO 12D will remain in effect when they are most applicable and will be suspended when they are not. Ultimately, all these protections would end when UniteCT no longer has funds.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this proposal that continues to provide eviction protection to tenants and ensures that landlords are paid. We welcome the opportunity to speak with you all about this proposal.

Sincerely,

*Kiley Gosselin*  
Partnership for Strong Communities

*Erin Kemple*  
Connecticut Fair Housing Center

*Raphael Podolsky*  
Connecticut Legal Services

*Anika Singh Lemar*  
Clinical Professor of Law, Yale Law School  
[institutional affiliation provided for identification purposes only]