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The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) **supports SB-337**, which eliminates the mandate that municipalities store the possessions of tenants who have been evicted.

The property storage mandate imposes an unnecessary cost on towns and cities. Municipalities should not bear any responsibility for storing possessions for evicted tenants because they are not a party to the transaction, which is purely a landlord/tenant issue.

Unfunded state mandates continue to drive up local costs beyond the control of our small towns and cities. Connecticut must help to relieve some of the burden on our municipalities by providing relief from unfunded mandates and refraining from adopting any new unfunded mandates, however well-intentioned.

A 2006 report prepared by the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) indicates that, “In the overwhelming majority of the 37 states that we researched, a landlord may dispose of personal property that a tenant leaves in dwelling units by selling it after first notifying the tenant of his intent and storing the property for a period prior to the sale.”

Under Connecticut law, however, the responsibility for storing the property is shifted to the municipality, which places a heavy financial burden on our towns and cities. The requirement that towns store an evicted tenant’s possessions is extremely costly and burdensome, particularly at a time when towns are struggling to provide residents with services without raising property taxes. There are an estimated 2,500 residential evictions per year. Storage costs average between \$10 and \$15 per day, per eviction, for an average of 15 days. This can range from approximately \$12,000 to \$165,000 per municipality.

A few years ago, the legislature eliminated the mandate that municipalities *transport* the possessions of tenants who have been evicted, which recognized that the municipality should not bear the expense of transporting these items because they are not a party to the transaction. However, for some reason, the mandate that municipalities *store* the possessions remained. **It’s time to eliminate this mandate which simply imposes unnecessary costs on municipalities and taxpayers for issues that are beyond their control.**

COST is an advocacy organization committed to giving small towns a strong voice in the legislative process. Its members are Connecticut towns with populations of less than 30,000. COST champions the major policy needs and concerns of Connecticut’s suburban and rural towns.