



Legislative Testimony
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Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 6049, An Act Concerning Police Protection at Carnivals and Fairs that Do Not Serve Alcohol

Senator Bradley, Representative Horn, Ranking Members Champagne and Green, and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

My name is Kelly McConney Moore, and I am the interim senior policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 6049, An Act Concerning Police Protection at Carnivals and Fairs that Do Not Serve Alcohol.

We strongly encourage the committee to support House Bill 6049. In the wake of last summer's Black Lives Matter uprisings – possibly the largest movement in U.S. history¹ – this new legislature must recognize that its election is a mandate from the electorate to prioritize racial justice in policing. When voters went to the polls to cast their absentee ballots in November, 69% said that racism was either an important problem or the most important problem facing the United States.² In Connecticut, 81% of voters in New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport believe that as communities face police violence and racism, it is more important than ever for government to take steps to reform the criminal legal system.³ These voters also supported directing money away from policing and into resources that actually support communities, like education, mental healthcare, jobs, infrastructure,

¹ See Larry Buchanan, Quoc Trung Bui, & Jugal K. Patel, "Black lives matter may be the largest movement in U.S. history." *New York Times*, July. 3, 2020, *available at* <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>.

² November 2020 Exit Polls, CNN.com, *available at* <https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results/51>.

³ "New poll shows Connecticut voters in three key cities support reallocating money from policing into other public services." ACLU of Connecticut, Oct. 29, 2020, *available at* <https://www.acluct.org/en/press-releases/new-poll-shows-connecticut-voters-three-key-cities-support-reallocating-money>.

housing, and more.⁴ There is strong support among Black voters in Connecticut's cities to move money away from policing kids in schools and into other supportive resources.⁵

This bill offers an easy opportunity to respond to the will of voters. Reevaluating whether all aspects of our lives – including the simple recreation of fairs and carnivals – need to be policed is a good start. Current law allows the police to tell carnival and fair operators whether police presence is needed.⁶ Considering that the police are paid to be there, police have a strong incentive to require police presence. Changing that requirement, and allowing organizers to opt out of policing if it is not needed is a small step away from the overpolicing that permeates the U.S.

This Committee should support House Bill 6049 as but one of many, many small steps that are needed to transform our society from one that put too much emphasis on police, disproportionately harming Black and brown people in the process, into one where healthy, strong communities are the source of our security and safety. We urge this Committee to support House Bill 6049.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Conn. Gen. Stats. § 7-284 (2020).