



Legislative Testimony
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Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 6393, An Act Concerning the Insurance Department’s Recommendations Regarding Surety Bail Bond Agents

Senator Lesser, Representative Wood, Ranking Members Hwang and Pavalock-D’Amato, and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate 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 6393, An Act Concerning the Insurance Department’s Recommendations Regarding Surety Bail Bond Agents.

We encourage this Committee to support House Bill 6393. Particularly, Section 2 of this bill will establish continuing education requirements for licensed surety bail bond agents in Connecticut. Bail bond agents are largely an unregulated industry in many parts of the country, professing to be “self-regulating” but often failing to require real standards or accountability.¹ Even advocates for bail bond agents admit that licensure and education requirements can help remind agents of the limits of their authority.² In Connecticut, bail bond agents have wide discretion to arrest a person utilizing a bail bond³ and have the right to use reasonable physical force to effect that arrest.⁴ Bail bond agents are for-profit businesses that, along with the insurers that back them, make billions on the backs of low-income people and comm⁵unities of color that have been ravaged by mass incarceration and overpolicing. Given their power – and profits – continuing education is necessary (but not sufficient) to regulate bail bond agents. For these reasons, the ACLU-CT supports House Bill 6393 and urges this Committee to do the same.

¹ Jamiles Lartey, “ACLU challenges bail bonds system after bounty hunters charged with assault.” *The Guardian*, May 3, 2019, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/may/03/montana-bail-bondsmen-bounty-hunters-aclu-lawsuit>.

² See Katie Bo Williams, “Does the bounty-hunting industry need reform?” *The Atlantic*, Jul. 23, 2015, available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/07/does-the-bounty-hunting-industry-need-reform/399224/>.

³ See Conn. Gen. Stats. § 29-152k (2020).

⁴ See Conn. Gen. Stats. § 53a-22(f) (2020).

⁵ Udi Ofer, “We can’t end mass incarceration without ending money bail.” ACLU, Dec. 11, 2017, available at <https://www.aclu.org/blog/smart-justice/we-cant-end-mass-incarceration-without-ending-money-bail>.