



Legislative Testimony  
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**Written Testimony on Senate Bill 5, An Act Strengthening the Protections  
Against and Response to Domestic Violence**

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel and Fishbein,  
and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am writing to testify on Senate Bill 5, An Act Strengthening the Protections Against and Response to Domestic Violence with specific opposition to Section 1.

Domestic violence is a real and serious problem in Connecticut, and we urge this committee to increase the funding of social service programs that help domestic violence survivors, to protect victims of domestic violence from housing discrimination, and to further invest in violence prevention programs that cultivate healthy, safe relationships.

The ACLU-CT is an organization dedicated to ending mass incarceration, eliminating racial disparities in the criminal legal system, and reducing harms to justice-impacted people. There is little data regarding recidivism and electronic monitoring, and the evidence shows that electronic monitoring does not have an effect. The financial penalties associated with electronic monitoring disproportionately fall on people of color and people with lower incomes.<sup>1</sup> Electronic monitoring also raises significant privacy concerns, because the data generated can be accessed by law enforcement and private companies, resulting in increased interactions between

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<sup>1</sup> Leah Mack, *Electronic Monitoring Hurts Kids and Their Communities*, JUVENILE JUST. INFO. EXCHANGE (Oct. 24, 2018), available at <https://jjiie.org/2018/10/24/electronic-monitoring-hurts-kids-and-their-communities/>.

youth and the police.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the overly rigid conditions of electronic monitoring, such as obtaining approval before leaving home or holding youth responsible when the equipment breaks, make it difficult to work, change their schedules, or respond to emergencies. Electronic monitoring does not lower incarceration rates, it is not rehabilitative, and it is not cost-effective. The ACLU-CT opposes Section 6 of the bill, and encourages this Committee to eliminate electronic monitoring. Instead, this Committee should support bills that address domestic violence without additional surveillance.

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<sup>2</sup> Kate Weisbrud, *Monitoring the Youth: The Collision of Rights and Rehabilitation*, 101 IOWA L. REV. 297 (2015), available at <https://ilr.law.uiowa.edu/print/volume-101-issue-1/monitoring-the-youth-the-collision-of-rights-and-rehabilitation/>.