



Legislative Testimony  
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**Written Testimony Opposing Senate Bill 968, An Act Requiring  
Background Checks for Renewal of a Security Officer License**

Senator Gaston, Representative Boyd, Ranking Members Cicarella and Howard, and distinguished members of the Public Safety 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 in opposition to Senate Bill 968, An Act Requiring Background Checks for Renewal of a Security Officer License.

The ACLU-CT believes in a society where all people, including those who have been convicted or accused of a crime, have equal opportunity to contribute to society and build successful and fulfilling lives. One of the biggest injustices faced by people living with a criminal record are the myriad of collateral consequences flowing from that criminal record, which persist for years, even lifetimes, after a person finishes the punishment they were sentenced to. Collateral consequences turn any sentence into a life sentence. In Connecticut, people living with a criminal record face over 550 legal barriers to full societal participation.<sup>1</sup> These barriers prevent people from obtaining employment, housing, education, and services. Collateral consequences are not just bad for the people who experience them, they are bad for children, families, and communities as well.

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<sup>1</sup> National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction, *available at* [https://niccc.csgjusticecenter.org/database/results/?jurisdiction=260&consequence\\_category=&narrow\\_category=&triggering\\_offense\\_category=&consequence\\_type=&duration\\_category=&page\\_number=1](https://niccc.csgjusticecenter.org/database/results/?jurisdiction=260&consequence_category=&narrow_category=&triggering_offense_category=&consequence_type=&duration_category=&page_number=1); see also Kelan Lyons, *Council Begins Study of Discrimination Against People with Criminal Records*, CT MIRROR (Aug. 22, 2019), *available at* <https://ctmirror.org/2019/08/22/council-begins-study-of-discrimination-against-people-with-criminal-records/>.

Connecticut is making strides toward eliminating collateral consequences of criminal records, but to achieve this goal, the state cannot continue to impose new collateral consequences. Unfortunately, this is exactly the effect of legislation that requires needless background checks or that erects unnecessary barriers for people living with criminal records. By mandating background checks, this bill creates another collateral consequence.

The ACLU-CT recommends that the Committee consider a balancing test like the one in Public Act 22-88, which follows an individualized approach and considers evidence of rehabilitation and the amount of time since the conviction. This acknowledges that the longer ago a person violated the law, the less likely their conviction factors into their ability to do their job as a security guard.

The ACLU-CT opposes legislation that adds to the labyrinth of collateral consequences that people living with a criminal record face every day in this state. Senate Bill 968 will add another collateral consequence to the bucket. As such, we encourage the Committee to oppose Senate Bill 968 unless it is amended to consider the individualized approach discussed in this testimony.