



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting HB 5796, An Act Requiring Public Comment
Periods at Public Agency Meetings**

Senator Rahman, Representative Kavros DeGraw, Ranking Members Fazio and Zullo, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee:

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting written testimony in support of HB 5796, An Act Requiring Public Comment Periods at Public Meetings.

The essential function of democracy is to allow the people to have a voice in government. One of the most crucial ways that people can have a voice in their government is to observe, participate in, testify at, and attend public government meetings. The involvement of the public in public government meetings should not be limited to merely permitting people to attend a meeting, but rather the public should be guaranteed space to provide oral testimony and comment. This legislation adequately balances the need to provide for public comment while still granting public agencies the ability to structure the public comment period to ensure decorum. Providing that public meetings must permit public comment will make our democracy stronger by allowing more people the chance to weigh in on matters that affect our lives. We urge this Committee to support House Bill 5796.