



Legislative Testimony  
765 Asylum Avenue, First Floor  
Hartford, CT 06105  
860-523-9146  
[www.acluct.org](http://www.acluct.org)

**Written Testimony Opposing  
House Bill 5545, An Act Concerning Local and State Cooperation in the  
Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law**

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is David McGuire, and I am executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am here to testify in strong opposition to House Bill 5545, An Act Concerning Local and State Cooperation in the Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law.

The ACLU-CT fights to protect justice and equality for all Connecticut residents, including undocumented people living in our state. The Trump Administration's federal deportation machine is tearing apart families and communities in Connecticut. Our state's safety, health, and values are better served by opting out of participation in this cruel system. We therefore oppose this draconian and unnecessary bill that would ignore public safety and health by mandating state and local law enforcement to feed the federal government's deportation machine.

House Bill 5545 would undermine justice, equality, safety, and community by requiring the state's unnecessary participation in the federal government's deportation program. By weakening Connecticut's TRUST Act to require state and local law enforcement to serve federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees without a valid federal judicial warrant, this bill focuses local law enforcement on the federal government's deportation agenda, not on local priorities.

It is important to be clear about the TRUST Act that this bill would undermine. Connecticut's TRUST Act is constitutional, and it furthers public health and safety in our

state. The federal government's threats against places that have chosen to side with public health and safety by declining to participate in the federal government's deportation machine are baseless and unconstitutional. Multiple courts have ruled against the federal government's attempts to force local and state governments to serve its deportation goals. Furthermore, this bill's requirement for state and local law enforcement to serve ICE detainees without a valid federal judicial warrant is not reflective of the law. ICE detainer requests are just that: requests. They do not carry the weight of a warrant, and they provide no legal obligation or even justification for local law enforcement to detain, arrest, or jail someone. When local police decide to serve the federal government's deportation agenda instead of local communities, they risk becoming a lawless taxi service and jailer for ICE.

The law is clear: if ICE wishes to detain or deport someone, it can expend its own resources and time doing so. In fact, the federal government has proposed giving ICE billions of dollars to do just that. Local and state law enforcement are under no obligation to assist with this process. Local and state police do not need to arrest, transport, or detain people for ICE, nor do local jails, courthouses, or prisons need to allow ICE to roam their facilities. Yet this bill would require them to do so, without any legal justification.

This bill would require local and state police to use their time and resources to help the federal government with arresting, detaining, and deporting Connecticut community members. This would unnecessarily undermine trust in Connecticut's justice system and jeopardize health and safety. Indiscriminate arrests and practices such as detaining people at courthouses sow fear in immigrant communities and make it harder for local law enforcement to earn trust. As the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Major Cities Chiefs Association said in a joint statement last year, in their view, building this trust is "essential to reducing crime and helping victims." No Connecticut resident should have to be afraid that police will arrest and jail them for deportation them if they call for help after being the victim or witness of a crime, or go to a hospital with police stationed in the lobby. This kind of fear and distrust jeopardizes everyone's safety and health.

The Connecticut residents being targeted by the federal government's deportation agenda are our neighbors, family members, and friends. They are coworkers, bosses, parents,

caretakers, and business owners. They are people like Malik Naveed Bin Rehman and Zahida Altaf of New Britain, Joel Colindres of New Fairfield, Sujitno Sajuti of West Hartford, Nury Chavvaria of Norwalk, Hugh Williams of Waterbury, and many more. The pain and fear that the federal government's deportation agenda is wreaking on immigrant communities is undeniable, and Connecticut should take every step possible to ensure that local and state law enforcement are not parties to this harmful machine.

We strongly urge this committee to oppose this harmful bill.