



Legislative Testimony
765 Asylum Avenue, First Floor
Hartford, CT 06105
860-523-9146
www.acluct.org

**Written Testimony Supporting
House Bill 5320, An Act Concerning Occupational
Licensing and Building Trades**

Senator Leone, Senator Witkos, Representative D'Agostino, and distinguished members of the General Law Committee:

My name is Kaley Lentini, and I am legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 5320, An Act Concerning Occupational Licensing and Building Trades.

Though this bill very generally requires the Department of Consumer Protection Commissioner to adopt regulations “regarding occupational licensing and the building trades,” we encourage the committee to direct the commissioner to take this opportunity to adopt regulations to ensure fair occupational licensing for people with criminal records. One in three American adults has a criminal record. For someone reentering society, a fair chance at a job can break the cycles of poverty and crime by allowing them to support themselves and their families.

Allowing people with criminal records to apply for and obtain more types of occupational licenses is important for society as whole. There is evidence that removing barriers to employment for people with criminal convictions improves the wellbeing and strength of families and communities. As the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has noted, “unemployment is associated with a variety of negative health effects,” while employment can create the “income, benefits, and stability necessary for good health.” While licensure does not guarantee employment, it is an important entry point toward securing a steady income in a number of occupations.

This bill, in combination with the committee’s Senate Bill 326, An Act Requiring the Commissioner of Consumer Protection to Undertake a Study Regarding Occupational Licensing, could result in important steps being taken to allow more people with criminal records to gain employment in the building trades. We encourage the committee to broaden and support this bill.