



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

**Written Testimony Supporting
House Bill 5328, An Act Concerning the Admissibility of Admissions,
Confessions, and Statements by Children under the Age of Eighteen**

Senator Moore, Senator Suzio, Representative Urban, and distinguished members of the Committee on Children:

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 Senate Bill 5328, An Act Concerning the Admissibility of Admissions, Confessions, and Statements by Children under the Age of Eighteen.

The ACLU-CT believes this bill would make Connecticut's juvenile justice system more fair and just. The legislature has taken great steps to reform Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System in recent legislative sessions, and this bill will bring our state one step closer to ensuring that youth are treated fairly by Connecticut's justice system.

There are inconsistencies regarding the admissibility of statements made by children. Statements taken from children under age 16 outside the presence of a parent are inadmissible in delinquency prosecutions. This bill would extend these protections to 16 and 17 year olds, as well. Children are far more susceptible to duress and coercion, especially in a stressful and intimidating law enforcement atmosphere. Unfortunately, this can lead to false confessions by youth, entrenching them in the juvenile justice system for long periods of time. This bill could help to prevent these situations from occurring.

I urge the committee to pass House Bill 5328.