



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 5375,
An Act Creating a Working Group to Study Housing Options
for Persons Reentering the Community after Incarceration**

Senator Slossberg, Senator Hwang, Representative Butler, and distinguished members of the Housing 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 5375, An Act Creating a Working Group to Study Housing Options for Persons Reentering the Community after Incarceration. This bill would require the Commission on Equity and Opportunity to convene a working group to study housing options for people reentering the community after incarceration and to report its recommendations for evidence-based housing policy for this population to the Housing Committee.

The ACLU-CT believes that formerly incarcerated people should have equal access to housing. Housing is incredibly important for formerly incarcerated people, as it enables a stable environment for them to reconnect with their family and friends and begin working. Without stable and safe housing, it can be difficult for people reentering society to obtain and keep employment. Lack of stable housing can also contribute to increased recidivism for people who were formerly incarcerated.

The ACLU-CT encourages the Commission on Equity and Opportunity to include formerly incarcerated people in its housing study working group. Formerly incarcerated people have critical firsthand knowledge of people's housing needs when reentering society, and their voices are essential for ensuring thoughtful recommendations.

Dedicating a working group to studying housing resources for people reentering the community would demonstrate that the legislature understands how important it is for people to have the opportunity to succeed after incarceration. Stable, safe, affordable housing for people reentering society is not only beneficial for formerly incarcerated people; it is good for the public at large. When someone is worrying about basic shelter, it can be hard for them to become an engaged and active resident of our state.

The ACLU-CT encourages the working group to study all available housing options for formerly incarcerated people. People face many challenges when reentering the community. Finding safe, affordable, and stable housing should not be one of them.

We urge the committee to support this bill to create a working group to engage in meaningful work that could lead to important changes in housing for Connecticut residents reentering our state's communities.