**Written Testimony Supporting
House Bill 5543, An Act Concerning the TRUST Act**

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 support of House Bill 5543, An Act Concerning the TRUST Act.

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 support this bill to strengthen the TRUST Act and ensure that state and local law enforcement are not feeding the federal deportation machine.

House Bill 5543 presents the Connecticut General Assembly with a chance to stand up for justice, equality, safety, and community by limiting the state's unnecessary participation in the federal government's deportation program. By strengthening Connecticut's TRUST Act to prohibit state and local law enforcement from serving federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainers without a valid federal judicial warrant, this bill focuses local law enforcement on local priorities, not the federal government's deportation agenda.

This proposal has the Constitution on its side. Multiple courts have ruled against the federal government's attempts to force local and state governments to serve its deportation goals. The federal government's threats against states and municipalities that have chosen to prioritize public safety over deportation are lawless and baseless. Furthermore, this bill's

prohibition on allowing state and local law enforcement from serving ICE detainers without a valid federal judicial warrant also reflects 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.

The law is clear: if ICE wishes to detain or deport someone, it can expend its own resources and time doing so. 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.

This bill also has the public's interest on its side. When local and state police use their time and resources to help the federal government with arresting, detaining, and deporting Connecticut community members, they are unnecessarily undermining trust in Connecticut's justice system and jeopardizing 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."

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.

The ACLU-CT strongly supports House Bill 5543 and urges this committee to support it.