



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting
Senate Bill 218, An Act Prohibiting Involuntary Sterilization
of Persons with Disabilities**

Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg, and distinguished members of the Public Health 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 Senate Bill 218, An Act Prohibiting Involuntary Sterilization of Persons with Disabilities, which would ensure the end of a cruel practice in our state.

As an organization that strongly supports reproductive freedom and bodily autonomy for all people, the ACLU-CT finds it alarming that the practice of involuntary sterilization is still used in Connecticut. All people, including people with disabilities, deserve freedom from forced, life-altering medical procedures. We urge this committee to support this bill in an effort to protect the civil liberties of all Connecticut residents.

Under current state law, the government can impose sterilization upon a person with disabilities without that person's consent. Connecticut law currently allows a probate court to consent to the sterilization of a person who is under a guardianship or conservatorship if it determines that sterilization is in the "best interest of the person." This bill would remove a court's ability to make this determination for a disabled person and require, instead, informed consent from the person involved before they undergo sterilization.

The decision to undergo sterilization is a serious one that should be made by an individual, not a court. Sterilization can be an appropriate medical procedure for some people but only when they have the ability to weigh their options and make that decision for themselves. Everyone deserves to have control over their own body. In instances where a person is unable to make that decision due to their disability, however, we believe it is unjust to impose such a medical procedure on that person.

The ACLU-CT urges this committee to support this bill to protect the rights and liberties of people with disabilities in Connecticut.