



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 7222,
An Act Concerning the Duties of the Office of the Attorney General**

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, 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 7222, An Act Concerning the Duties of the Office of the Attorney General.

As an organization that defends, promotes, and preserves individual rights and liberties under the U.S. and Connecticut constitutions, the ACLU-CT is in favor of measures to protect and strengthen civil rights in Connecticut. We therefore support House Bill 7222, which would formally recognize the power of the Attorney General to help protect the civil rights of Connecticut residents.

In a time when attacks on civil rights are commonplace, it would be useful to augment the team of people, agencies, and organizations working to protect these rights in Connecticut. It is important that the legislature explicitly authorize the Attorney General to advocate on behalf of the people of Connecticut by filing civil rights lawsuits. This would enable the Attorney General to join the fight to end large-scale, systemic violations of residents' rights in a more robust and effective way.

The Attorney General's civil rights effort could be a very useful complement to the work of existing civil rights agencies and organizations. As we understand it, the Office of the Attorney General would implement its new authorization in a way that does not supplant or detract from the important work of current civil rights experts and advocates in the state. Instead, the Attorney General's efforts would enhance the work of other actors in the space.

Recognizing the Attorney General's role in defending the civil rights of our residents would bring Connecticut in line with other states. Twenty-two states across the nation, including nearby Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island, formally authorize their Attorneys General to protect the civil rights of their residents by combatting discrimination.

We strongly encourage the committee to support House Bill 7222 to help protect the civil rights of Connecticut residents.