



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting
Senate Bill 831, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to
Special Parole and Parole Discharge Statutes**

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 submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 831, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to Special Parole and Parole Discharge Statutes.

The ACLU-CT supports the rights of all people, including formerly incarcerated people who are on parole. We support this bill, which we believe would allow the Board of Pardons and Parole to ensure that special parole is only used for as long as is necessary.

Special parole is a particularly restrictive form of state supervision of formerly incarcerated people, as it was meant only for a small group of high-risk cases. If a person on special parole violates a condition or rule of their special parole, they may receive additional conditions of special parole or may even be sent back to prison for the remainder of their special parole sentence. Under this system, someone can be sent back to prison for something as minor as showing up late for an appointment with a parole officer or testing positive for drugs. This can perpetuate the cycle of incarceration and punishment of people for small rule infractions, not criminal conduct.

Connecticut disproportionately sentences people of color to special parole, yet there is no evidence that people of color commit crimes at higher rates than white people. The state also disproportionately sends Black people who are on special parole back to prison. Forty-seven percent of the people on special parole that are sent back to prison for violating conditions of special parole are Black, while the portion of both Hispanic and white people sent back to

prison for special parole violations are each 26% of the total population. This bill may help to reduce the total number of people on special parole and potentially alleviate the high numbers of people of color sent back to prison for special parole violations.

We strongly encourage the committee to support Senate Bill 831.