



Legislative Testimony
765 Asylum Avenue, First Floor
Hartford, CT 06105
860-523-9146
www.acluct.org

**Written Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 363, An Act Concerning the
Duties of the Office of the Attorney General**

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel and Fishbein, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kelly McConney Moore, and I am the interim senior policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 363, 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 Senate Bill 363, 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, especially on the basis of a person's race, religion, gender identity, and other marginalized identities, are commonplace, Connecticut should create new avenues to protect these rights. 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. Around half of the 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. The ACLU-CT strongly encourages the Committee to support Senate Bill 363 to bring Connecticut in line with our neighbors and to provide an additional avenue to protect the civil rights of Connecticut residents.