



Legislative Testimony  
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**Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 6875, An Act Concerning the Issuance of a State Identification Card or Motor Vehicle Operator's License to a Person Being Discharged from a Correctional Facility**

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

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am writing to testify in support of House Bill 6875, An Act Concerning the Issuance of a State Identification Card or Motor Vehicle Operator's License to a Person Being Discharged From a Correctional Facility.

The ACLU-CT is committed to ending mass incarceration, eliminating racial disparities in the criminal legal system, and reducing harms to justice-impacted people. This includes addressing the root reasons why people come into contact with the criminal legal system in the first place and ensuring that people who do come into contact with the criminal legal system get the help and support that they need. In order for Connecticut to end mass incarceration, this legislature must support bills like House Bill 6875.

The ACLU-CT supports House Bill 6875 as a simple but important means to supporting people incarcerated in Connecticut's prisons as they return home. Without state issued identification, it is difficult to obtain employment, housing, social services, or other health care services. These are resources that are already extremely difficult for people living with a criminal record to obtain.

State law currently instructs the Department of Corrections to make state issued identification available to people as they leave correctional facilities, but the law does not provide concrete instruction and leaves too much discretion to DOC. At Transitions Clinic Network, a primary care health care provider serving Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport, which exclusively serves people returning home from incarceration, less than half of patients return home with proper state issued identification. As a result, thousands of people return home to their communities with only a birth certificate or a social security card, and not a state issued identification, leaving them with burden of navigating the complex system at the Department of Motor Vehicles. This process often hinders people living with a criminal record from obtaining employment, social service supports, and housing upon release.

House Bill 6875 would provide concrete direction to DOC by ensuring that it creates a simple system to make sure that all people receive access to the proper state issued identification as they leave prison. The onus must be on DOC to affirmatively ask people if they want identification rather than put the burden on people who are incarcerated, and costs to obtain identification must be waived. The ACLU-CT strongly supports House Bill 6875.