

**Testimony before the Judiciary Committee on**

**Raised Senate Bill No. 153: An Act Concerning the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons and Raised Senate Bill No. 154: An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons  
And  
Raised House Bill No. 5211: An Act Concerning Underage Drinking**

By Renee C. Redman, ACLU of Connecticut  
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Thank you Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Renee Redman. I am a lawyer, the Legal Director of the ACLU of Connecticut, and a member of the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons.

**On behalf of the ACLU of Connecticut, I respectfully request the Judiciary Committee to favorably report Bills Nos. 153 and 154.** Trafficking in persons or “human trafficking” is a form of slavery. Traffickers force individuals to engage in prostitution or other labor through physical force, threats, coercion and deception. They prey on individuals who are poor, unemployed or underemployed and who lack social safety nets. Victims do not have to be foreigners. However, many victims are lured to Connecticut with false promises of jobs and better lives, only to be forced to work under brutal and inhuman conditions. Victims are found in prostitution, sex entertainment, domestic work, agriculture and sweatshops. They are not only women and children; they are also adult men.

There is evidence that human trafficking is taking place in Connecticut. I have personally spoken with trafficking victims but am unable to elaborate further because they chose to not come forward. They were afraid of what the traffickers would do to them and their family members, both here and abroad. Some were in the United States legally; others were not.

The victims’ refusal to come forward is typical. Trafficking victims often do not recognize that they are victims and almost never declare themselves as victims to the police, their lawyers or even social service personnel. They have usually been threatened with physical harm, deportation, and/or arrest by the police. They often do not speak English and come from places where the police do not assist victims and, in fact, are often participants in the trafficking.

Thus, law enforcement personnel need to be trained to identify, detect and prosecute trafficking crimes, enforcement agencies need to collect data and analyze trends, and social service providers must have the resources with which to assist victims. These bills would provide those opportunities.

Lastly, I want to express **the ACLU's opposition to House Bill 5211: An Act Concerning Underage Drinking**. Our concerns center on the vagueness of certain language in the Bill, the infringement of Constitutional privacy it encourages, and the strong likelihood of disproportionate enforcement against minorities.

- The standard in section 1(a) - a "knowing" "person having possession of, or exercising dominion and control over, any dwelling unit or private property" failing "to make reasonable efforts to halt" possession of alcoholic liquor by minors - is so vague as to occasion grossly disparate enforcement even by members of the same police department, to say nothing of different departments.
- Police action in the case of analogous municipal ordinances has typically been in response to telephone calls regarding a disturbance at a private home. If alcoholic beverages are seen or if there is suspicion that a minor has used alcohol, further police investigation and entry onto the property and into the home has followed. This Bill provides a pretext for such police entry into private homes. It essentially provides for warrantless searches.
- Enforcement in more densely populated urban areas with higher police calls is likely to inexorably lead to its use as a pretext for other investigative purposes and will have substantial disproportionate minority impact.
- The government's imposition of criminal sanctions for mere possession of alcohol in a private home interferes with parental autonomy and the parent-child relationship. Under this Bill, minors and their adult siblings would be criminally sanctioned for drinking at home.

The problem of underage drinking is a serious one, but the legislature should carefully consider the practical impacts of these proposals on the rights of ordinary citizens, and **reject House Bill 5211**.