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Testimony of the City of New Haven
Before the Judiciary Committee

In Support of
H.B. 6659 AN ACT CONCERNING CIVIL IMMIGRATION DETAINERS

Submitted by
Sean Matteson, Chief of Staff
March 22, 2013

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 6659 An Act Concerning Civil Immigration Detainers – the “Trust Act”.

This bill will reform Connecticut’s participation in the Secure Communities, “S-Comm” Program by encouraging the Department of Corrections (DOC), Judicial Marshals and local law enforcement to exercise discretion and only comply with ICE requests when a criminal suspect is convicted of felony under Connecticut law, thereby setting a uniform standard for all law enforcement and bringing participation in the program back to its original goals.

New Haven is a welcoming and open community, and we are at our best when we provide opportunities for economic and social mobility for all families. “S-comm” runs counter to what we value as a community: it divides families when we are working to keep them together; it creates barriers between law enforcement and residents when we are working to build trust; it creates fear when we are looking to build hope.

We are all sons and daughters of immigrants, that is our history as a city, a state, and a country, and that is something we should celebrate, not attack. The hard work of immigrant families made this nation, and it made this city, and we cannot forget that.

When we create barriers between residents and police, between residents and the services they need, our state as a whole suffers. We believe Connecticut can do better. We urge passage of HB 6659 which will go a long way toward restoring trust between local law enforcement and immigrant communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.