



March 22, 2013

State Senator Eric Coleman  
State Representative Gerald Fox, III  
Joint Committee on Judiciary  
Legislative Office Building Room 2500  
Hartford, CT 06106

SERVICE EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION  
CTW, CLC

RE: RB 6659 - An Act Concerning Civil Immigration Detainers

**Local 32BJ  
Headquarters**  
25 West 18th Street  
New York, NY 10011-1991  
212.388.3800

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

**HÉCTOR J. FIGUEROA**  
President

My name is Kurt Westby, and I am a Vice President and Connecticut State Director for Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ, which represents over 120,000 building service workers throughout the Northeast region. Our union includes the full breadth of America today. 32BJ members come from 64 different countries, speak 28 different languages, and represent a microcosm of immigrants as well as families with long histories in the U.S. We all share the American Dream, a commitment to making life better for working families, and a fundamental respect for the dignity of all people.

**LARRY ENGELSTEIN**  
Executive Vice President

**KYLE BRAGG**  
Secretary Treasurer

**LENORE FRIEDLAENDER**  
Assistant to the President

On behalf of my union, and the 4,500 working men and women we represent in the state of Connecticut, we are calling for passage of Raised Bill 6659, also known as the Connecticut TRUST Act, which would ensure that state and local law enforcement resources are not misspent on immigration enforcement activities that target working people and undermine community relations.

**VICE PRESIDENTS**  
SHIRLEY ALDEBOL  
JAIME CONTRERAS  
ROB HILL  
GABE MORGAN  
JOHN THACKER

The expansion of the misguided federal Secure Communities Program throughout the state of Connecticut threatens to indiscriminately draw hard working immigrants into detention and deportation proceedings. This is not good policy for Connecticut or its residents. Though Secure Communities is a federal program, the State of Connecticut continues to have the power to set policy with regard to whether and when it will comply with requests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to hold individuals on immigration detainers. In fact, the Administration of Governor Daniel Malloy has administratively adopted such a policy for the Department of Corrections and the State Police. Passing the legislation before you is necessary to build on that policy and ensure the best use of state and local law enforcement resources.

**Capital Area District**  
Washington 202.387.3211  
Baltimore 410.244.5970  
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**District 1201**  
215.923.5488

**Florida District**  
305.672.7071

**Hudson Valley District**  
914.637.7000

**Mid-Atlantic District**  
215.226.3600

A growing number of jurisdictions, including New York City, Washington, DC, San Francisco, Cook County, Illinois, Santa Clara County, California, and Taos, New Mexico, have enacted state and local detainer policies that establish when they will and when they will not hold a person for additional time at ICE's request.

**National Conference of  
Firemen and Oilers**  
202.962.0981

**New Jersey District**  
973.824.3225

**Western Pennsylvania District**  
412.471.0690

Immigration status does not impact workers' legal right to organize, join a union or otherwise enforce their workplace rights. In fact, 32BJ has run successful organizing campaigns involving immigrant and non-immigrant workers standing

[www.seiu32bj.org](http://www.seiu32bj.org)

**Connecticut District**  
Kurt Westby, District Director

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shoulder to shoulder to improve their workplace conditions here in Connecticut. However, bad-actor employers often use threats of immigration enforcement or the need to re-verify workers' status as tools of intimidation to chill workers from organizing or enforcing their rights.

The increase in emphasis on local enforcement of immigration law such as through the Secure Communities program bolsters employers' claims that workers who speak up or organize could face arrest, deportation or job loss. This fear does not just harm undocumented immigrants; entire communities suffer when immigrants are arbitrarily swept into detention and deportation proceedings. The consensus among economists is that immigrants' presence as consumers grows local economies and creates jobs.

In states like Connecticut, in which the volume of immigration is slightly higher than the national average, a diverse workforce creates significant economic advantages that will be diminished if the state adopts unnecessarily restrictive and punitive immigration policies. Creating detainer policies that keep Connecticut's interests at heart would be an important step in the right direction.

In Solidarity,

**Kurt Westby**

Vice-President and Connecticut District Director

Local 32BJ, SEIU