Testimony in Support of S.B. 54
Muhammad Ansarri, Connecticut NAACP

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Muhammad Ansarri and I am the Political Action Chairman of the Connecticut State Chapter of the NAACP.

The Connecticut NAACP supports Senate Bill 54, An Act Concerning Collaboration Between Boards of Education and Law Enforcement Personnel.

The inappropriate use of student arrests is a serious problem in Connecticut. The NAACP advocates for smarter, results-based criminal justice policies to keep our communities safe, including an end to racial disparities at all levels of the system. **Research shows pervasive and disturbing racial disparities in student arrests in Connecticut.** Connecticut Voices for Children's analysis of student arrest data found that students of color and students in poorer districts are arrested at significantly higher rates than their peers. These disparities exist statewide and in nearly every district.

Statewide, during the 2010-2011 school year:[i]

- **Black children were nearly 4 times more likely to be arrested** in school than white children
- **Hispanic children were over 3 times more likely to be arrested** in school than white children
- **Children in the state's poorest districts** (District Reference Group [DRG]I) **were 9 times more likely to be arrested** in school than children in the wealthiest districts (DRG A)
- Disparities are widespread, affecting children in nearly all districts. **In every single district reference group (DRG), Black and Hispanic children were more likely to be arrested than their white peers.**

S.B. 54 takes crucial steps to reduce the often inappropriate and disparate use of student arrests by promoting collaboration between police and schools. It also improves clarity and transparency by collecting and making data on school arrests publicly available.

On behalf of the Connecticut NAACP, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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[i] *See* Sarah Esty, "Arresting Development: Student Arrests in Connecticut," Connecticut Voices for Children, (September 2013), available at: http://www.ctvoices.org/publications/arresting-development-student-arrests-connecticut.