



## CONNECTICUT CHAPTER

RE: S.B. No. 371 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING RETALIATION AGAINST IMMIGRANT WORKERS.

Recommended Committee Action: SUPPORT THE BILL

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association [CT AILA] is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization comprised of immigration attorneys and law professors who are members of the national organization American Immigration Lawyers Association [AILA]. AILA was founded in 1946 to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.

The Connecticut Chapter has approximately 175 members who represent U.S. families seeking permanent residence for close family members, as well as U.S. businesses seeking talent from the global marketplace. CT AILA Members also represent foreign students, entertainers, athletes, and asylum seekers, often on a pro bono basis.

Based on these experiences, CT AILA supports S.B. 371 because:

### 1. S.B. 371 would protect all workers in Connecticut.

CT AILA members represent both U.S. employers and immigrant workers. We work with responsible businesses to ensure that they comply with federal immigration laws and regulations. We have also represented workers who have been victims of wage theft, discrimination and even physical assault by unscrupulous employers who exploit immigrants' reluctance to complain about even the most grievous labor violations.

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This bill seeks to protect all employees (including U.S. citizens, permanent residents and immigrants authorized to work on the U.S.) by prohibiting employers from engaging in unfair employment practices against immigrant workers who seek the protections of Connecticut's labor laws. For example, this bill would discourage employers from threatening their employees with false police reports and unwarranted calls to immigration authorities, a practice which is far too common. As a matter of fact, often, the employees being threatened are legally working in the U.S., but still fear that these types of false reports may nonetheless result in their arrest or deportation from the U.S.

At the same time, this act would protect U.S. citizen employees by strengthening Connecticut's laws that mandating that all workers are paid the required wages for the services they perform and that businesses comply with health and safety regulations. This bill reduces the ability of an unscrupulous employer to operate a business without regard to state and federal law because unscrupulous employers would be less able to manipulate employees with threats of false police reports and unwarranted calls to immigration authorities.

**2. Nothing in S.B. 371 interferes with an employer's obligations to follow federal immigration laws that ensure that an employee is authorized to work in the United States.**

The proposed bill specifically states that "nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent an employer from complying with the requirements of state or federal statutes, rules or regulations, case law or rules of self-regulatory organizations." All employers must still follow the federal standards that determine whether an individual has the necessary legal permission to work in the United States.