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**Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 1031,
AN ACT CONCERNING BAIL AMOUNTS SET BY JUDGES and in Support of House
Bill 1066, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF RECIDIVISM**

Good afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and distinguished members of Judiciary Committee. My name is David McGuire. I am the Staff Attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT) and I'm here to testify in support of the House Bill 1031, An Act Concerning Bail Amounts Set By Judges and in support of House Bill 1066, An Act Concerning the Reduction of Recidivism.

Connecticut criminal defense lawyers, particularly those who present indigent clients, know that most poor defendants are subjected some pretrial detention because they do not have the monetary means to raise bond. Connecticut prisons currently house a large number of non-violent accused people who are behind bars because they are broke. This results in prosecutors having much more leverage to extract plea deals. Sadly, we know of innocent poor people who pled guilty solely due to their dire financial situation and the need to get out of jail and back to their families.

This bill would limit the amount of bond a judge could set in misdemeanor cases to \$ 5,000.00 unless good cause is found to set a higher amount. The unnecessary overuse of pretrial detention undermines the administration of equal justice and wastes limited criminal justice resources. This bill will create consistency and will help prevent excessively high bond amounts.

Let's modify existing bail laws to make sure that pretrial detention is used for its stated purpose-to keep the public safe and ensure that criminal defendants show up in court. Passing House Bill 1031 will help prevent poor people charged with minor crimes from being needlessly detained.

The ACLU-CT also supports the passage of House Bill 1066, An Act Concerning the Reduction of Recidivism. We are particularly supportive of the study regarding the feasibility of creating a special population within prisons to help inmates suffering from drug abuse. Similar specialized treatment programs work well and are being adopted by corrections systems across the country. We also laud the bill's plan to provide more resources to bolster reentry programs. This will keep our state safer by lowering recidivism rates.