



Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

We, CT Students for a DREAM, are writing in support of HB 7039, which will update the TRUST Act adopted in 2013, reforming state and local responses to civil immigration detainers (“ICE detainer requests”) and providing crucial protection to Connecticut residents.

CT Students for a DREAM is a statewide organization of undocumented youth and allies that seek to fight for the rights of undocumented youth and their families and empower them through community organizing, leadership development, and advocacy.

We as an organization support any legislation that positively affects the undocumented student community. This bill will advance public safety by rebuilding the trust between immigrant communities and local police that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has undermined through “Secure” Communities (S-Comm) and its successor, Priority Enforcement Program (PEP-Comm).

This legislation is especially pertinent to undocumented students and their families. Many undocumented students face barriers to accessing higher education or even finishing high school (only 60% graduate according to a report by the Center for American Progress). Many undocumented students do not disclose their status out of fear and therefore never get the support that will help them take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Even though HB 7039 does not directly address educational concerns, any legislation that improves relations between the immigrant community and law enforcement means that undocumented students and their families are less afraid to take advantage of opportunities and fight for their rights.

Having parents or other family members detained with threat of deportation is also very traumatic for students and this stress can make it very hard for undocumented students to focus on school. This can lead to negative educational outcomes.

Currently, families and friends of undocumented students are reluctant to contact the police or approach courthouses because they are worried about their immigration status being communicated to ICE, and fear being held under an ICE detainer. DHS programs have undermined public safety, and immigrants have been unable to report landlord abuse, workplace abuse, and other crimes in our communities.

The proposed TRUST Act amendments close major loopholes in the current legislation ensuring that all CT law enforcement officers do not detain any individual based on any ICE detainer requests. It also prohibits CT law enforcement officers from sending information to ICE about custody status or release of individuals in CT custody, and keeping immigration status confidential. The amendments in this bill would uphold a federally approved division between local law enforcement and federal immigration authorities. They would protect Connecticut taxpayers by ensuring that the state does not

expend local resources on ICE detainer requests. Most importantly, the bill would foster community prosperity, safety, and unity.

Connecticut has long been a pioneer in immigration reform and protection, and it is time for Connecticut to continue to be a pioneer by amending the TRUST Act of 2013.

Sincerely,

Connecticut Students for a Dream
www.ct4adream.org