



My name is Juan Hernandez, and I am the District Leader for Connecticut at SEIU 32BJ. SEIU 32BJ represents 145,000 building service workers along the East coast. 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.

On behalf of my union, and the 4,500 working men and women we represent in the state of Connecticut, I am here to call for passage of House Bill 7039, a bill to improve the Connecticut TRUST Act. This bill, if passed would further ensure that state and local law enforcement resources are not misspent on immigration enforcement activities that target working people and undermine community safety.

We commend Connecticut for being a leader on immigrant rights. In 2013, Connecticut made history by passing the TRUST Act. When the bill passed, the Connecticut TRUST Act helped to restore goodwill and cooperation between immigrant communities and local law enforcement, built protections against racial profiling, and empowered local CT law enforcement officers working to do the right thing by preventing public resources from being spent on unconstitutional detentions. While Connecticut has been a leader nationally in the movement to restore trust between local law enforcement and immigrant communities, it is crucial for Connecticut to be a leader again by passing House Bill 7039 to update the Connecticut TRUST Act. As the law exists now, there are loopholes that allow some local law enforcement to hold some individuals on ICE detainer requests, mandate notification to ICE regarding the detention or release of individuals with detainers, and lacks key procedural protections for those who are held on ICE detainers. Additionally, since 2013 changes in federal and local policies, as well as important settlements in federal courts, make it urgent for Connecticut legislators to update the TRUST Act to reflect those changes.

It is crucial for Connecticut to continue to work to build trust between immigrants and local law enforcement officials. Immigrants are vital members of our community. Immigrants make our state's economy function. They work in essential industries that make Connecticut a good place for residents to live and an attractive state for investors and potential residents alike. But when immigrants face insecurity in the workplace, on the street, and in their homes, our whole state suffers the consequences. ICE's collaboration with local law enforcement and the justice system causes immigrants to be wary of reporting labor abuses, making them more likely to be exploited at work and lowering labor standards across industries. Immigrant workers' constant fear of detention and deportation, enhanced by the credible threat that unscrupulous employers may call the police and have their workers deported, feeds a two-tier labor market that harms all of us, both business and labor. Our state must continue to encourage immigrant workers to come out of the shadows, and should not push them deeper underground. A policy that stakes a clear separation between the state government and federal immigration enforcement would send a strong message that immigrants are welcome in Connecticut.

On behalf of SEIU 32BJ, I urge the state of Connecticut to continue to be a national leader in helping to ensure that all members of the community are safe and welcome. I urge you to stand on the side of justice with immigrant communities by passing House Bill 7039 to update the Connecticut TRUST Act.