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**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 156,  
An Act Concerning the Data Collection  
February 23, 2016**

Good afternoon Senator Winfield, Representative Butler and distinguished members of the Housing Committee. My name is David McGuire. I am the Legislative and Policy Director at the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT) and I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 156 5.

The ACLU-CT has serious concerns about the lack of housing opportunities available to people in need of subsidized and affordable housing in Connecticut. The Fair Housing Act (FHA) was enacted to prevent housing discrimination and to ensure diverse housing options for every American. For many years, the ACLU-CT has relied on civil rights laws to increase housing options for low-income and minority families outside of high poverty communities. Our organization has successfully challenged discriminatory government policies on site selection, tenant relocation, Housing Choice Voucher administration, tenant selection, and exclusionary suburban housing and zoning policies.

As members of the Housing Committee, you are all aware that multiple agencies and departments provide housing to Connecticut residents. There is no central source from which we can assess comprehensive data on who is receiving housing, what kind of housing is provided or available, where housing is available, or even who is paying for subsidized housing. Senate Bill 156 is essential, because a lack of complete low-income housing data makes it impossible for the government, residents, and watchdog groups to determine FHA compliance. In order to truly assess whether Connecticut is meeting its obligations to its citizens, the state must collect data and make it accessible to potential tenants, developers, and housing advocates. Although residents have the right not to share certain information, such as their race or ethnicity or certain medical information, it is essential for Connecticut agencies to attempt to collect and analyze this data. Doing so would provide all of us—policymakers, housing advocates, potential tenants, and more—with better information from which to assess whether Connecticut's housing opportunities are fair, equal, and just. For these reasons, we urge you to support Senate Bill 156. Thank you for your consideration.