

Dear Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Laurel LaPorte-Grimes. I live in Manchester, CT and I am part of Uniting for a Safe Inclusive Community - Manchester. I would like to submit written testimony in support of HB5544: An Act Concerning Connecticut Misdemeanor Sentences.

I am in support of this bill because I do not think that unjust federal laws should be able to separate families here in CT. I do not think that these same laws should be able to determine that someone is undeserving of a second chance, simply because they are a more recent immigrant to our country. Reducing the maximum length of all misdemeanor convictions in Connecticut to 364 days would help to reduce the impact of these discriminatory federal laws on our families and friends here in CT and would give our CT judges more discretion in considering all of the factors and circumstances when considering applications for immigration relief.

Our justice system should be one that truly embodies justice, not one that serves as a prison to deportation pipeline. Our society should be one that seeks to support our community members in their attempts to live, work and support their families, not one that expects them to be perfect people. Here in CT we can help to ensure that this is the case. This bill would help to re-balance the scales of justice in our state and I believe that is a goal worth working toward.

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