

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

My name is Diana Juárez. I live in New Britain, Connecticut.

I write to you today to express my support for House Bill 5544: An Act Concerning Connecticut Misdemeanor Sentences. This proposal would reduce the maximum length of all misdemeanor convictions in Connecticut to 364 days. This technical fix could sever a segment of the prison-to-deportation pipeline, which funnels community members who served their time in state correctional facilities directly into immigration detention and deportation proceedings. This means individuals who served mere months or less for minor charges can be ripped away from their families and communities!

We cannot allow the State of Connecticut to feed community members into an unjust and inhumane deportation machinery. We must ensure that all community members, regardless of immigration status, can live freely once out of state custody.

Misdemeanor sentencing reform would:

- Allow formerly incarcerated community members an opportunity to participate in a true 'second chance society'
- Foster public confidence in Connecticut's judicial and criminal justice systems
- Stem the cycle of mass incarceration that disproportionately impacts people of color
- Allow immigration judges greater discretion to consider the totality of the circumstances in considering applications for immigration relief

Connecticut cannot allow unjust laws at the federal level tear our people away from their families and communities. Funnelling individuals with mere misdemeanor convictions into deportation proceedings runs counter to public safety, peace, and common notions of justice and fairness. Let us protect the rights and lives of our community members.

Sincerely,
Diana Juárez
New Britain resident