

# Legislative History for Connecticut Act

## PA 17-106

### HB7284

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Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public  
Hearing(s) and/or Senate and House of Representatives  
Proceedings

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**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2017**

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cmw  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Will you be willing to pull this bill because it does not state in the bill that construction vehicles will be eliminated from doing this.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Belsito, would you be willing to yield the floor to Representative Ritter? Take that advice.

REP. BELSITO (53RD):

Yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER (1ST):

I move that we pass this temporarily, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Without objections, the item is passed temporarily.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 460.

THE CLERK:

On page 45, House Calendar 460, substitute House Bill number 7284, AN ACT CONCERNING STATE

IDENTIFICATION FOR INMATES UPON REENTRY.

Favorable report of the Joint Standing  
Committee on Judiciary.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative de la Cruz.

REP. DE LA CRUZ (41ST):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for the  
acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report  
and the passage of the bill.

SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Questions on acceptance and passage, will you  
explain the bill, please sir?

REP. DE LA CRUZ (41ST):

Yes sir and thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill  
was put in to allow inmates, whether it was a felony  
or a misdemeanor, to once they're incarcerated in  
prison, to on their way out, have a maybe a 30 or  
40-day trigger where they're gonna get a license.

So upon reentry into the community, they'll  
have identification, whether it's a state ID or a,  
hopefully a drivers' license. If they had a valid  
drivers' license before they went into prison, on

the way out, they'll have a valid drivers' license out, whether expired or not.

Again, this is a bill that's really related to the opioid crisis and was one of the reasons that I came up here, to try to get something like this passed. We're trying to get folks work and when they come out without a license and just a piece of paper with their name on it, it's very difficult to get those folks jobs.

And I'd also like to point out that a couple of Veterans groups have jumped on. They're really excited about this bill and they're looking forward to hopefully its passage. They're seeing a huge uptick with Veterans struggling to get IDs after committing crimes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, sir. [GAVEL] Thank you.

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the legislation that's before us. I also

want to take the opportunity to thank Senator Winfield who has been working on this for many years and the Judiciary Committee for making the necessary changes in order to see it come through the Committee and hopefully ultimately make it through the two Chambers.

I'd like to thank the good Representative for his description and if I just may, through you, Mr. Speaker, a few questions just for clarification.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Proceed.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker, is it correct that this legislation, in fact, does not have a fiscal impact and it is codifying the current practice that's taking place?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative de la Cruz.

REP. DE LA CRUZ (41ST):

Yes, that is correct. I was hoping -- not hoping for a fiscal impact but I think a lot of

times the folks in that situation have trouble paying for the license on the way out. But I think it's gonna end up being a positive fiscal impact because if they get jobs and they stay out of prison, it's gonna result in savings. Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I actually agree with that sentiment because when I looked at this legislation, if we expect these individuals to come out and be reformed, we want them to be able to more easily get housing and jobs and having identification certainly would be assisting in that situation and those challenges once someone's released from prison.

Again, just for further clarification, through you, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about individuals who actually have been convicted of a crime who spends time in prison but then upon their release, would have this opportunity. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative de la Cruz.

REP. DE LA CRUZ (41ST):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes that is correct.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again, I wanna thank the Representative for his responses. I think it's important that the legislation that is before us is within appropriations but these individuals, when they come out, they have to make this request. And then they also have to be found eligible because not everyone's going to be found eligible for either a state ID or drivers' licenses.

And they also, in this legislation, requires the individual to pay if there is any fee associated with obtaining that identification.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I do rise in support of the legislation and I thank everyone for the good work that they did and I do ask my colleagues to



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support it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, ma'am. Will you remark further on the bill. Will you remark further on the bill? If not, staff and guests please come to the well of the house, members take their seats, the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll;  
members to the Chamber. The House of Representatives is voting by roll; members to the Chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? If so, the machine will be locked. Clerk will take a tally. And the Clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 7284.	
Total Number Voting	147
Necessary for Passage	74
Those voting Yea	147

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Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 4

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The bill is passed. [GAVEL]

Calendar 142.

THE CLERK:

On page nine, House Calendar 142, substitute  
House Bill 6520, AN ACT RAISING THE ASSET LIMITATION  
FOR COMMUNITY BANKS AND COMMUNITY CREDIT UNIONS.

Favorable report of the Joint Standing  
Committee on Banking.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Distinguished Chairman of the Banking  
Committee. And before we go to you, Representative  
Lesser, [GAVEL] could we have the area around  
Representative Lesser just cleared so he, we can  
hear and see him and vice versa. Please. Any time.  
Now. Thank you. Representative Lesser.

REP. LESSER (100TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move acceptance of  
the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage  
of the bill.

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**CONNECTICUT  
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SENATE**

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SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On calendar page 17, Calendar 393, House Bill 7161,  
like to place that item on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On calendar page 17, Calendar 395, House Bill 7230,  
like to place that item on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On calendar page 18, Calendar 402, House Bill 7082,  
like to place that item on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objections so ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On calendar page 23, Calendar 436, House Bill 7214,  
like to place that item on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

On calendar page 23, Calendar 437, House Bill 7284,  
like to place that item on our Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

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**CONNECTICUT  
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Seeing no objections, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I apologize for that error and now Madam President if the Clerk can call the items on the Consent Calendar and followed by a vote please.

THE CHAIR:

We will stand at ease for two seconds. Well maybe a minute, got to get this all done.

Mr. Clerk, now will you start calling the, what's on the Consent Calendar please.

THE CLERK:

On page 8, Calendar 260, House Bill 5884; page 8, Calendar 259 House Bill 5583; also on page 8, Calendar 265 House Bill 7007; on page 14, Calendar 364 House Bill 7062; page 15, Calendar 370 House Bill 7002; page 16, Calendar 381 House Bill 7169; on page 17, Calendar 393 House Bill 7161; page 17, Calendar 395, House Bill 7230; page 18, Calendar 402 House Bill 7082; on page 18, Calendar 401 House Bill 7081; on page 18 Calendar 397 House Bill 7120; page 20 Calendar 413 House Bill 5764; on page 21, Calendar 416 House Bill 7243; also on page 21, Calendar 418 House Bill 6741; page 22, Calendar 432 House Bill 5077; page 23, Calendar 426 House Bill 7214; also on page 23, Calendar 437 House Bill 7284; page 25, Calendar 457 House Bill 7164; also on page 25, Calendar 455 House Bill 7102; page 26, Calendar 465 Senate Bill 1056; page 26, Calendar 471 House Bill 7032; on page 28, Calendar 482 House Bill 7194;

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on page 29, Calendar 486, House Bill 7020; page 29, Calendar 487 House Bill 7205; also on page 29, Calendar 488 House Bill 5554; page 30, Calendar 492 House Bill 7080; page 30, Calendar 493 House Bill 7132; page 32, Calendar 530 House Bill 7202; on page 32, Calendar 533 House Bill 7202; page 32, Calendar 532 House Bill 7198; page 32 again, 534 House Bill 7190; on page 33, Calendar 535 House Bill 7195; also on page 33, Calendar 536 House Bill 7311; page 33 again, Calendar 538 House Bill 5963; on page 34, Calendar 542 House Bill 6992; page 35, Calendar 551 House Bill 7013; on page 38 Calendar 562 House Bill 7263; on page 39, Calendar 567 House Bill 7312; page 48, Calendar 240 Senate Bill No. 966; also on page 48, Calendar 291 Senate Bill 644; page 50, Calendar 480 House Bill 7059; on page 51, Calendar 443 House Joint Resolution No. 63; and on page 51, Calendar 444 House Joint Resolution No. 67; page 51, Calendar 445 House Joint Resolution No. 3 and House Joint Resolution No. 74.

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THE CHAIR:

Do you want to repeat that back?

THE CLERK:

No.

THE CHAIR:

No? (Laughter and Gavel). At this time, I call for a Roll Call Vote on the Consent Calendar and the machine is open.

THE CLERK:

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Immediate Roll Call has been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar for the day. Immediate Roll Call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, all members have voted the machine will be closed. Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On the Consent Calendar for today:

Total number voting	36
Necessary for Adoption	19
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar has passed. (Gavel)

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President, may we stand at ease for a moment?

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:



**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**JUDICIARY  
PART 5  
2628 - 3207**

**2017**

## PUBLIC HEARING

just -- we'll have you go down for your three minutes.

SCOTT SEMPLE: I just have -- I submitted written testimony. I do have some brief testimony.

SENATOR DOYLE (9TH): Sure. As you know, Commissioner, people are here, they're not here, nothing we can do.

SCOTT SEMPLE: Good morning and thank you. For the record, I am Scott Semple. I'm the Commissioner of Correction and I'm happy to be here with Karen and Mike who just left me here by myself but that's okay. I too am in support of House Bill 7044 and 7045. I've also submitted written testimony in support of three bills, and that is Senate Bill 1023, AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY SUPERVISION OF CERTAIN FORMER INMANTES, Senate Bill 575, AN ACT CONCERNING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES OF THE RISK REDUCTION EARNED CREDIT PROGRAM, and House Bill 7284, AN ACT CONCERNING STATE IDENTIFICATIONS FOR INMATES UPON REENTRY.

I've also submitted written testimony in opposition of three other bills -- and I submit this respectfully -- Senate Bill 428, AN ACT CONCERNING ELIGIBILITY TO EARN RISK REDUCTION RELEASE CREDITS, House Bill 5992, AN ACT CONCERNING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE EARNED RISK REDUCTION CREDIT PROGRAM and House Bill 7133, AN ACT CONCERNING GOOD TIME CREDITS, so.

Since I became the commissioner back in 2015, the department has focused its efforts in reducing recidivism and revictimization. And the department has also established reintegration centers in three facilities and just recently launched a rededicated

## PUBLIC HEARING

program for the 18 to 25 year old population. This, I'm told, is the first in the nation. The department has also revitalized its vision of parole and community services to supervised inmates in the community based on their risk to reoffend and to address fair employment, housing, and treatment issues. Thank you for this opportunity. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

SENATOR DOYLE (9TH): Thank you, Commissioner. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none. Thank you very much, Commissioner.

SCOTT SEMPLE: Thank you.

SENATOR DOYLE (9TH): Well, we're still on the public officials. I see State's Attorney Kevin Kane's here. Sir, as you learned last week, we give you brief comments but after the comments, you can get quite a few questions, as you learned last week.

KEVIN KANE: I'll be real brief and hope to get questions.

SENATOR DOYLE (9TH): Okay, well you got a lot of questions last week so we'll see.

KEVIN KANE: I'm here to testify about one bill. We submitted written testimony on a couple of bills here, but I'm here to testify about one bill and that's Senate Bill Number 1022, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO -- it's entitled to provide enhanced community services to those in the criminal justice system. We're very much -- I think what the concept of this is, we're very much in favor of it.

I'd like to work a little bit with the proponents of this bill to deal with the wording, and here's why -- and I -- if we're talking about making real

HB 7287  
HB 7044  
HB 7045

## PUBLIC HEARING

none. Thank you. Next speaker is John Lahda. Is John Lahda here? Not here. Okay. Then, Michael Harris? Michael Harris here?

MICHAEL HARRIS: Good afternoon. Representative Tong, Senator Doyle, and the rest of the members of the committee -- Senator Kissel. I'm here on behalf of Mayor Toni Harp. My name is Michael Harris. I'm the City of New Haven's state legislative liaison offering testimony in support of H.B. 7284 relating to driver's license for the reentry population upon release.

The City of New Haven established the state's first municipally funded reentry office project *Fresh Start*. In response to the large portion of incarcerated residents who are released on our city streets with the drop off point at Whalley Avenue. Taking on the burden of reintegrating people back into our society from release from prison is one the city's large priorities over the course of the last several years and it's a big priority of the Harp administration to ensure that the successful reintegration to housing and jobs and a role in the community is a benefit both to the individual and to society as a whole.

Our reentry offices have conducted surveys as to the immediate needs of the population in securing employment and housing and the lack of available identification is one of the top needs, particularly for securing housing in this population. Upon release from prison in Connecticut somebody is given a printout that is supposed to be their identification that is a piece of paper that has their identifying information and a printed picture. Obviously that's not durable in a meaningful way as

## PUBLIC HEARING

well as it's poorly understood by employers and in the housing market.

Most of these people we work with to either get Elm City IDs so they have a form of identification or we work to make sure that they go back to the DMV to get a piece of identification. It's actually one of the steps in the checklist that our reentry office has for getting people the tools that they need to get a job. So what this means is that very often these people are coming back to the DMV, scheduling time and services that could be going to other members of the population if there is a more efficient way to get them identification.

And so recognizing that there is a cost to the collaboration, it's the city's position that this cost is actually less than the current borne cost by sending these people back to the DMV -- either it's a more direct provision of the services or there's a greater cost to society for the individual who isn't able to go back to the DMV and take a full day to get a driver's license. So for that, in order to get people better access to jobs and housing, the City of New Haven would support action on this bill.

SENATOR DOYLE (9TH): Thank you. Any questions?  
Senator Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): I want to thank you for coming up here to testify and I didn't expect too many people -- that they need to testify about it because of people who directly who have an issue are very unlikely to be here. But it's an issue that I've worked on for over a decade and as a legislator I've been told that they do have IDs.

## PUBLIC HEARING

They don't have IDs and then found out that when I very specifically said I was not talking about that piece of paper that you referred to that some of the commentary was about that piece of paper which you and I both know they have a hard time using. So I think this is a very important piece of legislation and if we're going to talk about second chances it factors into that in ways I think that we don't generally think about, so I just wanted to thank you for being one of probably a very few that would offer testimony on that piece of legislation. Thank you.

MICHAEL HARRIS: Absolutely. Our reentry offices have a forthcoming piece of written testimony that carries some of the information on our survey assessments but in the conversations on broader [clearing throat] employment initiatives for reentry, this is one of the pieces that we've identified and put in testimony for bail and labor. It's one of the few that didn't come with programming dollars from the state for incentives for employers.

SENATOR DOYLE (9TH): Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you and thank you Mike, for your testimony. I want to echo what Senator Winfield said because this is critical and we've heard it from all of the people there from a city who gets a lot of people trying to reenter in the community. It's something we're trying to help and I hope that this continues forward and we remedy this now cause Senator Winfield is right, we've been fighting that for a long time and -- [clearing throat] excuse me -- the commissioner of DOC really

## PUBLIC HEARING

has been trying to help us out in this too, so I thank you for your testimony.

MICHAEL HARRIS: Thanks.

SENATOR DOYLE (9TH): Thank you. Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair and good afternoon. Thank you for your testimony. Just a quick question. Was it ever proposed to have someone from DMV go to the correctional facility when there is an individual about to be released or several individuals to do this even before they're released?

MICHAEL HARRIS: So my understanding of the current proposal is that that -- [clearing throat] is the partnership that this is envisioning and as a matter of policy for reentry programs, bringing up the point of contacts further into the process of release is been shown nationally to be very successful. So the city's partnering with a series of nonprofit organizations to go into the prisons beforehand to start interviews and case management before release so people have plans for housing and employment and reintegration.

We think that a partnership from the DMV in the correctional institution pre-release is the most effective way to ensure that people get their drivers license and their form of identification. So at least in the -- the City's envisioning of what a partnership like this might look like, that would be something this bill would accomplish.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And is this mostly inmates who -- do they have identification before they went in and it was -- it being held and it expired or was

it possibly individuals who ever even had identification from the start?

MICHAEL HARRIS: Where's a few different dynamics that play and one of them is that broadly, the population who are being incarcerated are -- there is a population that does -- is under identified. They don't have the rates of driver's license of the rest of the population so that's a challenge to begin with as well as the duration that people are in prison can lead to the expiration of driver's license or it may not be something that they kept over the course of their time and so there's a variety of reasons for people not to have identification or current identification that might be useful depending upon the length of their incarceration.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you for your testimony. I guess, as I sit here, I think this is such common sense that we're expecting these people to come out, be able to go look for a job or as you said, housing or anything else -- and not to have ID on them, I think is just a disservice that we're doing but I do think it should be done before the actual release because even that's gonna be time consuming in the sense of filling out an application.

I'm just curious how we can just make this happen and not make it a -- you know, a huge fiscal note in the sense of going online, renewing licenses in advance that possibly were expired -- to have that special permission. Obviously the individual's been identified as someone that's gonna be going back out into the community. I don't -- you know, it's just -- it's mind boggling how this hasn't been addressed. Thank you.



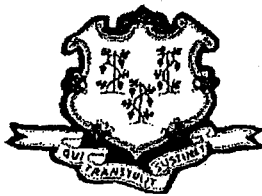
**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**JUDICIARY  
PART 6  
3208 - 3644**

**2017**

003415

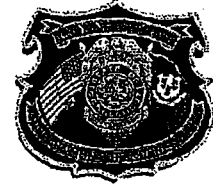
PAGE 2  
LINE 2



Dannel P. Malloy  
Governor

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER



Scott Semple  
Commissioner

Good Morning Senators Doyle & Kissel, Representatives Tong & Rebimbas and the other members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Scott Semple the Commissioner of Correction and I am here to express the Agency's support and respectful opposition to several bills on the Committee's Agenda.

I have also submitted additional information on the Department's Risk Reduction Earned Credits (RREC) program for the Committee's review. Since Governor Malloy took office, he has made protecting the public one of his top priorities. The Department of Correction has supported this effort by making our prisons safer for staff and inmates and assisting the inmates, both in our facilities and under the supervision of the Division of Parole and Community Services, to successfully return back to Connecticut's cities and towns where they live.

The Governor's bills, House Bill 7044 and 7045 continue this focused effort to devote the State's resources where they are most effective. In particular, House Bill 7045 takes a targeted approach on the 18-20 year old population - an age cohort that is most likely to create disturbances among inmates and staff, one that is most likely to return to prison for another crime, and the one age group most likely, with smart intervention, we can be successful in turning their lives around to become contributing residents of our state. House Bill 7044 will divert individuals who do not need to be incarcerated pretrial so that the Department can dedicate its staff and services to those inmates who need them most.

The Risk Reduction Earned Credits program is an integral part of this effort. I want to take a moment to thank the members of the General Assembly who I have worked with to make this program as effective as possible. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Senate Republican President Pro Tempore Len Fasano's confidence in the Department's RREC program by submitting a bill on Today's Agenda - Senate Bill 575 - to codify our agency's current policies and procedures within state statute. Currently, our policy allows low risk offenders, who have been accountable to themselves during their incarceration, the greatest amount of credit. On the other hand, high risk offenders earn the least amount of credit. This model of credit application is in-line with public safety which is our agency's top priority.

Phone: 860.692.7482 ♦ Fax: 860.692.7483  
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SB1023  
HB7284  
SB428  
HB5992  
HB7133

The agency has submitted Senate Bill 1023, An Act Concerning Community Supervision Of Certain Former Inmates to extend the RREC program's reach in protecting the public and increasing the success of inmates returning into the community. Any inmate who does not currently have community supervision - either Probation or Special Parole - as part of their sentence would now be supervised by a Department of Correction Parole Officer for the number of days their aggregate time in prison was reduced by the RREC program. By providing these inmates with supervision and case management, they will have better access to their most important transitional services such as employment, housing and necessary treatment programs. This supports safer communities, fewer victims and a lower re-incarceration rate.

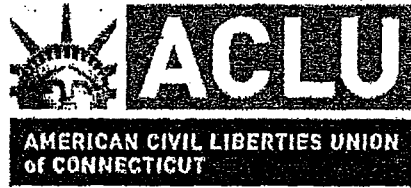
DOC also supports, in concept, House Bill 7284, An Act Concerning State Identification For Inmates Upon Reentry. DOC has done a LEAN Initiative and has worked closely with the Department of Motor Vehicles to increase the number of inmates who leave prison with identification so that they are more likely to gain employment. We would like to do even more; but obviously the current budget circumstances must take precedent.

Finally, the DOC has concerns with Senate Bills 428, House Bill 5992 and 7133 which would eliminate or severely reduce the Department's ability to get inmates into needed programming and also incentivize their good behavior while incarcerated. I think it is important for the Committee members to know that the State of Connecticut's current RREC program is one of the least generous nationally for inmates and one that has severe penalties for inmates who do not follow its rules and/or cause disruptions. The RREC program incentivizes good behavior for inmates in DOC facilities and encourages their participation in programs. As a result of our RREC program inmate fights and assaults on staff have declined significantly, thus creating a safer environment for our staff and inmates.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify on these bills and will be happy to answer any questions.

003417

PHU  
LINE 15



## Legislative Testimony

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**Written Testimony Supporting  
Governor's Bill 7044, An Act Concerning Pretrial Justice Reform  
and H.B. 7287, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Connecticut  
Sentencing Commission Concerning Pretrial Release and Detention**

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

My name is David McGuire, and I am the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in support of Governor's Bill 7044 and H.B. 7287. These bills would each take important steps to reform our state's pretrial justice system by remedying inequities and disparities.

During the past two sessions, Connecticut has passed criminal justice reforms that have served as national models. Governor's Bill 7044 presents another chance for our state to lead the way in creating a twenty-first century justice system, and to join places such as New Mexico, New Jersey, D.C., and Kentucky in reforming our pretrial justice system. By eliminating cash bail where unnecessary to truly ensure public safety, Governor's Bill 7044 will eliminate a penalty for simply being poor.

As a defender of equal justice under the law, the ACLU of Connecticut fervently endorses this bill's proposal to eliminate cash bail requirements for people charged with misdemeanors. As this bill rightfully proposes, bail should not be based on the money in someone's pocket. Justice isn't served by Connecticut's current bail system, which in some cases punishes people for being poor. In Connecticut's current pretrial system, a poor person charged with a misdemeanor, still legally innocent, could be trapped behind bars, while someone with means, charged with the same crime, could pay his or her way out of jail. In June 2016, 543 people were being held pretrial in Connecticut jails because they could not pay less than \$20,000 in bail.

Our Constitution promises equal treatment under the law, but emerging data shows that people stuck in Connecticut jails because they cannot pay bail are disproportionately minorities, and that courts set higher bail amounts for minorities than for white peers charged with the same crimes. These inequities leave the state vulnerable to legal challenges. Nationally, Black Americans are jailed at four times the rate of white Americans, and court systems issue higher bail amounts for Black and Latino Americans ages 18 through 29 than for people from other ethnic or racial groups. According to the Sentencing Commission's 2017 report, 61 percent of people held in Connecticut jails pretrial from 2012 through 2015 were Black or Latino, compared to a much smaller general population percentage. Similarly, in June 2016, 58 percent of people held in Connecticut jails pretrial on misdemeanor charges were minorities. Although eliminating cash bail will not solve the disturbing disparities in our justice system, it would offer one important step toward their remediation.



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES**

60 State Street, Wethersfield, CT 06161

<http://ct.gov/dmv>



***Testimony of Department of Motor Vehicles  
Commissioner Michael Bzdyra***

***Judiciary Committee Public Hearing  
March 20, 2017***

Good morning Chairmen Doyle, Kissel and Tong, Ranking Member Rebimbas and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB 7284 - An Act Concerning State Identification for Inmates Upon Entry.

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) supports the concept of HB 7284 but has concerns regarding the fiscal implications of implementing a program as proposed. A valid form of identification is required to secure employment, housing and open a bank account. Each of these steps are key for released inmates to function as productive members of society and reduce recidivism. For these reasons, the DMV in conjunction with the Department of Corrections currently has a system in place to provide a CT identification card to qualifying inmates prior to release.

In order to obtain an ID, he/she must meet the document requirements set by the Federal Real ID Act. These documents include a birth certificate and a social security card. Inmates often face several challenges securing their birth certificate and a social security card from prison and therefore, are not eligible for a state issued identification card.

In addition, the processing of identification cards for every inmate at no cost to the individual would require changes to current DMV processes and software system configurations creating a fiscal impact to the Department.