



Connecticut Education Association

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Testimony of

**Kate Dias, President
Connecticut Education Association**

Before the
Judiciary Committee

Re:
HB 7212 An Act Concerning the Trust Act

March 19, 2025

Honorable Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members and rank and file members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 7212 An Act Concerning the Trust Act.

My name is Kate Dias, President of the Connecticut Education Association (CEA). CEA is the state's largest association of certified public-school teachers, representing over 43,000 active and retired teachers across 158 school districts in Connecticut. CEA is dedicated to improving the lives of our teachers, the success of our students, and the overall quality of public education in our state.

CEA stands in solidarity with our students and their families. Our schools are meant to be safe spaces where students can learn and thrive securely, regardless of their immigration status. Our students need to focus on their studies free from unwarranted distractions, especially from threats of intimidation, detainment, and separation from their families. Recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions in "sensitive locations" such as schools, churches, and other institutions have left students and families in fear. For this reason, we support HB 7212, which seeks to strengthen protections against unreasonable and unlawful targeting of students on school grounds.

Our teachers take pride in the role they play in their students' lives. They provide them with the critical thinking skills and the social-emotional supports they need to be successful in academics and beyond. Many of them act as mentors to students, some of whom may not have a responsible adult or a positive role model in their lives. Teachers want what is best for their students, and strive to provide safe and welcoming school and classroom environments to promote learning. HB 7212 will provide peace of mind to students and teachers alike so that they can focus on education.

Further, Connecticut General Statutes guarantee a student's right to an equal opportunity to education, regardless of their national identity or immigration status. Section 10-15c of the Connecticut General Statutes clearly states that each child shall have "*... an equal opportunity to participate in the activities, programs and courses of study offered in such public schools ... without discrimination on account of race, as defined in section 46a-51, color, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.*" The U.S. Supreme Court has also long guaranteed such equal access since its 1982 decision in *Plyler v. Doe*.

HB 7212 limits certain actions by federal immigration authorities, including prohibiting arrests and detentions solely on the basis of immigration status, unless accompanied by a judicial warrant or carried out pursuant to a conviction for a serious felony or under genuine suspicion of terrorism. It also restricts the use of school resources to communicate with federal immigration authorities regarding the whereabouts or immigration status of students. The role of public schools is to educate students; it is not to be a battlefield for carrying out acts of arbitrary enforcement and political intimidation.

CEA strongly supports limiting ICE involvement at schools and other sensitive locations. These kinds of checks and balances are necessary to preserve the well-being of our students and the trust we maintain with the community. We applaud the proponents of this legislation and respectfully urge committee members to approve this bill without delay.