



Deacon David Reynolds
in Support
HB 7212 "AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRUST ACT"

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Public Hearing
March 19, 2025

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference stands in support of HB 7212 "An Act Concerning the Trust Act." The Catholic Church has long recognized the right of nations to control their borders and immigration. It has consistently stressed that immigrants, however, even "illegal immigrants," must be treated with human dignity and not with disdain or abuse. Unfortunately, the failure of our leaders on the federal level to fix a long-broken immigration system has created a humanitarian crisis. A crisis that now threatens the lives of those who have come to our nation seeking a better life for themselves and their families. A crisis that now has human beings living in fear of an unknown and possibly terrifying future. The State of Connecticut has a duty to protect these individuals from the overzealous threats of deportation and insure them the legal protections they deserve. Connecticut's Trust Act, and the changes proposed in HB 7212, helps preserve the human dignity and respect all people deserve.

Polling may show that most people support the identification and deportation of criminals and potential terrorists¹, but most immigrants are not in these categories. Federal authorities, by their actions and words, have led many immigrants who have come to our country to believe they will be caught up in this new enforcement effort. Even those who have lived here for many years or may have lived in our country since they were little children. To treat this group of immigrants in a manner that disrespects their human dignity and contributions to our society is unjust.

In 2008 the Catholic Bishops of Connecticut released a statement to the faithful on immigration entitled *"TO SEE THE IMMIGRANT THROUGH THE EYES OF FAITH."* In the document, the Bishops stated, *"We believe that all legal action, legislatively or in the area of law enforcement, should respect the dignity of the millions of undocumented men, women, and children within our borders. Federal authorities, not state or local law enforcement personnel, should be responsible for the enforcement of immigration laws. State and local law enforcement should be primarily concerned with maintaining order in our cities and towns. Undocumented immigrants within our communities should not be fearful of local and state authorities should a need arise to report a crime, a case of domestic abuse, or other illegal activities. Our state and local governments should act to ensure that a "shadow" community does not continue to grow within our state, due to the fear of immigration enforcement, where a segment of our population remains fearful of cooperation with state and local authorities. Criminal activities would surely flourish in such an environment."* These words still apply today.

The Catholic Public Affairs Conference urges the members of the Judiciary Committee to support HB 7212. This legislation is an effort to support human dignity, as our nation attempts to address the immigration failures of the past and chart a new path for the future.

¹ <https://immigrationforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Q4-National-Immigration-Forum-IF1-Crosstabs-Q4-2024.pdf>