

HB 5211 An Act Concerning Underage Drinking

Good afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kathryn Onorato and I am a junior at Old Saybrook High School, a volunteer for Mother's Against Drunk Driving as well as the Connecticut Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of bill 5211 An Act Concerning Underage Drinking.

I believe in and support this bill at the state wide level, and I am an active participant in my community to support a local ordinance of the same nature in Old Saybrook. I would hope this would mean something to you as your constituent, a future leader but most importantly a teen who is living in today's world. As a teen I see underage drinking at house parties for what it really is. A disgraceful, destructive practice that is becoming much more than a habit. The sad part is that this is not just my opinion but a fact that the state of Connecticut must become bold enough to deal with. Alcohol has become the drug of choice for teens in CT, an obvious fact as over 79% of 10th graders have consumed alcohol in the previous 30 day period. These are 14, 15 and 16 year old teenagers practicing an illegal activity. We should be ashamed of ourselves that our state has reached this point. I urge you to pass this bill and take this step to create more alcohol free environments so that we as teens may encounter more situations that are alcohol free. Do not give them one more place to hurt themselves and the communities they live in. Teens are drinking in the very places that should be their safe haven, a place where destructive behavior such as underage drinking should not exist. Please act on what you have heard today and support this bill not only in the committee, but on the floor of both the house and the senate. Show us, your voters that you will not only talk but you will boldly act and promote much needed change in regards to underage drinking in CT.

The public can urge you to act appropriately and pass this bill but in the end if you are the true public servants we thought we voted in, we know it will rest on your conscience. Please help us and join the force against underage drinking at house parties. You are a key factor in this movement and the responsibility is now yours. I want to believe that the state I will set my future in cares about my peers, and the well being of my community.

-Kathryn Onorato