



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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592

Testimony to the Committee on Judiciary

March 14, 2006

Chiefs Anthony Salvatore and James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

We Oppose R.B. 307, AN ACT LIMITING LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCESS TO RECORDED INFORMATION IN "BLACKBOX" EVENT DATA RECORDERS IN MOTOR VEHICLES.

Representative Lawlor, Senator McDonald and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with our position regarding the above proposed raised bill.

The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association opposes this proposed legislation, as it would restrict our ability to investigate certain motor vehicle accidents.

Under Connecticut General Statute 14-108a, the police are required to investigate motor vehicle accidents in the cases wherein the person is killed or injured or in which damage to property of any one individual, including the operator, is in excess of \$ 1,000.00. You may believe that it is relatively simple to get a search warrant issued by Superior Court. In truth, police cannot get a warrant unless there is probable cause that a crime was committed. Many serious crashes result from conduct which is not criminal, so no warrant will issue. The alternative is to get consent to examine the device, which may not be possible if the owner was killed or seriously injured in a crash.

Nevertheless these boxes hold information that aids us in investigating motor vehicle accidents. The data assists us in determining if there is operator error or mechanical failure, as stated in Connecticut General Statute 14-108a, which requires the police to determine cause of accident as part of our duties. To not use all available investigative resources would be a disservice to the public we serve.

Therefore, until we can resolve specific problems in obtaining pertinent data in a fatality or serious injury accident, the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association urges you to reject this proposal and allow us to continue to obtain the information as currently permitted.