

HB 5211 An Act Concerning Underage Drinking

Good afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Christopher DiStefano and I am a Senior at Haddam-Killingworth High School, and a Sergeant in the Madison Police Explorers. I am also the Youth Chair of The CT Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking which is an organization made up of over 700 public and private sponsors including health care professionals, police officers, community members, parents, and teenagers. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of bill 5211 An Act Concerning Underage Drinking.

Underage Drinking at house parties is a big problem in CT. A lot of negative consequences occur when kids decide to drink underage. Underage drinking at house parties can lead to suicide, date rape, property damage, brain damage, alcohol poisoning, assault, and other accidents. That is why this is absolutely critical to make sure we get this bill passed during this legislative session. We need to pass this in honor of the pain and suffering of victims of underage drinking incidents as well as their friends, and family. We can't let their lives and suffering be in vain. Passing this law is the ultimate sign of progression for the CT General Assembly to show that you will take underage drinking seriously.

In CT kids start drinking as early as the age of 11. That is 5th or 6th grade. This puts our drinking rates 26-28% higher than the national average. This is unacceptable. We need to stop underage drinking before it happens. I ask all of you to vote favorably on this bill not only in the committee, but on the floor of both the house and the senate.

Thank you for your continued support of this issue. I truly appreciate all of the years you have worked to try and pass this law. I am hopeful that this will be a year of monumental changes and long awaited advancement.

Chris DiStefano
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