



# CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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## **Testimony to the Judiciary Committee**

**March 13, 2006**

**Chiefs Anthony Salvatore & James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association**

We are here to speak on SB #456, AAC Electronic Recording of Interrogations. Its ostensible goal is to preserve evidence of valid confessions. We think that's a worthwhile goal.

To that end police leaders and state's attorneys have been meeting for several months to research and plan. We have invited investigators and prosecutors from jurisdictions which record interrogations to speak to us and to share their experiences. We have gained insights into the benefits of recording as well as its detriments, some of which were unanticipated. We have come to realize that if a recording program is undertaken, it must not be implemented haphazardly.

Therefore would support a pilot program with the following features. A sample of judicial districts and a number of their police departments or state police troops would begin electronic recording in the most serious offenses—capital crimes and A and B felonies—of statements given as a result of custodial interrogation in the police facility. The program would last long enough to track cases through trial and, if applicable, appeal. The program would include an annual report on the use and effect of recording.

The program will cost money. Police agencies will need to buy recording devices and storage media, wire and soundproof interview rooms, train their officers, arrange for transcription. Accordingly we ask the state to provide sufficient funds, and would begin the aforementioned tasks after receiving the funds. We hope that demonstrably valid confessions will result.

But we cannot support SB #456 as written. There has been no evidence presented that innocent people languish in Connecticut prisons due to coerced confessions. There is no convincing argument that Connecticut must statutorily mandate recording of interrogations. The true goal of the bill's proponents is to gain what they have failed to achieve in the courts—the exclusion of knowing, voluntary, and valid confessions from consideration as evidence. It would free criminals, re-injure victims, and diminish the safety of society.

If your desire for fairness is sincere, support the pilot program, and reject the bill.