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Testimony to the Judiciary Committee

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Chiefs Anthony Salvatore & James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

Bills #903, 904, and 6901 all require reporting of **Lost or Stolen Firearms**. We appreciate all of them, but the third is most comprehensive. It would require careful storage of guns, require a person whose gun was lost or stolen to report it to police within 72 hours of discovery, and would make first violation a mere infraction. It would also require the state police to maintain a database of such reports and violations.

We have asked several years running for help in keeping guns away from felons who can't buy them legally. This bill will discourage those allowed to buy firearms from illegally reselling them, and will give police a tool to stop the illicit gun-peddlers who persist. We urge you to approve.

Two bills, #149 and 7364, seek to require **Electronic Recording of Custodial Interrogations**, the latter by audio or video recording, the former by video only. We appreciate that their scope is limited to capital, A, and B felony cases, nonetheless we object to them as unfunded mandates.

To comply with either bill, every police department will have to make significant investments in recording devices and storage media; in wiring, lighting, and insulating interview rooms; in training officers and investigators. Failure to comply would risk invalidating voluntary, truthful, and otherwise legal statements.

Last year CPCA and prosecutors agreed to a pilot program with selected judicial districts and police agencies to start recording interviews once funding was received. The money was cut. If you truly believe that recording technology is necessary for justice to prevail, prove it by funding a recording program.

RB #1240, AAC Eyewitness Identification, would mandate by law how police conduct in-person or photographic line-ups. It is unnecessary. In 2005 prosecutors, CPCA, and the state police collaborated on model line-up procedures to incorporate the current "best practices." These instructions for officers and witnesses have been adopted by many, if not all, Connecticut police agencies.

However, #1240 includes requirements which were deliberately omitted from the model current policy for good cause. One is "sequential identification;" we omitted it in 2005 and object to it today because research as to its benefit is inconclusive. Another is the "blind" ID, wherein the line-up must be run by an officer who doesn't know the suspect. It could be impracticable in smaller agencies, where there may not be anyone unaware of the case and the suspect. The bill contains the qualifier, "where practicable," but still allows the defense an avenue of attack.

Witness testimony differs in quality because people differ in eyesight, memory, alertness, or experience. Witnesses will continue to make mistakes, but Connecticut has already taken steps to prevent police from causing those mistakes.

RB #1482, AAC Prohibiting Blocking the Box, is intended to reduce gridlock by making drivers who face a green light wait until there's room on the other side of the intersection. We approve the theory; as a practical matter this will be difficult to enforce.