



## State of Connecticut

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### Testimony of Representative Tom Reynolds

#### **S.B. 1348 An Act Strengthening Drunk Driving Enforcement and H.B. 6822 An Act Concerning the Installation of Ignition Interlock Devices April 2, 2007**

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Representative Tom Reynolds (Ledyard, Montville, Preston). I wish to testify in support of Raised Bill No. 1348, An Act Strengthening Drunk Driving Enforcement, and Committee Bill No. 6822, An Act Concerning the Installation of Ignition Interlock Devices.

Our nation has made great strides in combating drunk driving. Since 1980 alcohol-related automobile accidents have declined 40 percent. This progress was largely the result of tougher drunk driving laws, more aggressive enforcement, and education, prevention and advocacy efforts by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).

Unfortunately, we are experiencing a growing sense of complacency on this issue among the general public and some elected officials. In 2005 in Connecticut there were still 120 deaths as a result of alcohol-related crashes and many more injuries. Moving towards the elimination of drunk driving will require strengthening drunk driving laws and increasing investment in education and prevention.

I want to express my particular interest in and support of the addition to Section 12 of Raised Bill No. 1348, which states that evidence of the presence of an open alcoholic beverage container in the interior of the motor vehicle, shall constitute a rebuttable presumption that the person operating the motor vehicle was consuming alcohol while operating the motor vehicle.

Prohibiting possession of an open alcoholic beverage container in the passenger compartment of a motor vehicle is necessary to ensure that the driver does not consume the alcohol and become intoxicated or more intoxicated. I am persuaded that on open

container law would provide one more deterrent to drunk driving and will give our law enforcement agencies one more tool in the fight against drunk driving.

It is time for Connecticut to join 40 other states and the District of Columbia in adopting an open container law. It is time to once and for all sever the connection between alcohol and motor vehicles.

Thank you for your consideration of these important bills.