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**TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MARCH 17, 2008**

I appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 5860, An Act Concerning Notification of a Family or Household Member after a Motor Vehicle Fatality.

This proposal requires police to use reasonable efforts -- and establish clear policies -- to notify a decedent's family as soon as practicable after a motor vehicle fatality. The police shall provide the location of the accident and the decedent's body and such other information as required by the applicable police department policies. The legislation also requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council to design a model policy for local and state police departments to consider when implementing this act.

Police departments generally contact next of kin quickly after a motor vehicle accident. Exigencies sometimes may delay such contact. Last year, I received a letter from a mother whose child was a victim of such a fatal accident. The police delayed notifying her for hours and then failed to provide her with adequate information, including the investigation report compiled by the police department. A significant cause of the problem was the lack of uniform police policy for contacting and informing relatives.

I commend State Representative Ryan Barry for his leadership on drafting this legislation. I am proud to support this effort to ensure that police departments have proper policies for contacting relatives after this type of unfortunate situation.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 5860.