

Good afternoon, Chairman McDonald, Chairman Lawlor and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Steven Rief, and I am President of the Connecticut State Police Union.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today. I am here to speak in **FAVOR** of:

**PROPOSED BILL NO. 634**

***AN ACT CONCERNING HIGHWAY WORKER SAFETY***

I would like to start my testimony by stating that I am a Connecticut State Trooper. I have served the state in this capacity for nearly 19 years. As Union President I represent approximately 1160 State Troopers, Sergeants and Master Sergeants.

The Connecticut State Police have the primary responsibility of ensuring that the citizens and visitors of Connecticut are safe. This includes safety of the motoring public on our highways and secondary roads, as well as highway workers, police officers and other public safety personnel who work on our roadways. Each year our highways become more and more congested. There is an increased frequency of inattentive, unsafe and reckless driving. Traffic accidents and fatalities continue to plague our communities. As a society I think we recognize how dangerous our roadways have become.

In the past 25 years, Department of Transportation (DOT) highway crews and State Police Troopers have had a number of personnel struck while working on our roadways. Sadly, eleven (11) state employees have been killed in the line of duty from such accidents, not to mention the additional loss of life to the motoring public involved in accidents within work zones. Each year a number of our Troopers and DOT professionals, as well as private construction contractors, are struck and injured by passing motorists. Troopers, DOT and private contractors are confronted with these risks daily as part of their employment responsibilities.

Aggressive and enhanced measures need to be taken to better protect our highway workers. This can be accomplished through driver awareness and education campaigns, better traffic management controls and public information on work zone locations, targeted law enforcement initiatives within work zones, and enhanced statutes and associated fines.

It should be the priority of the State to ensure that highway work zones and highway workers are as safe and secure as possible. Enacting laws, such as the proposed bill, shows the commitment the State of Connecticut has to its workers and the motoring public. It is a quality of life issue facing our society, and protecting our public safety and highway worker personnel is the right thing to do.

I would like to close by thanking this committee for your attention to this important issue and I would be happy to answer questions and provide you with any further information.

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CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION  
Steven Rief, President