

Testimony of  
**Charles Laus**  
**Maintainer IV Carpenter, Department of Transportation**

Judiciary Committee  
Public Hearing – March 10, 2008

**S.B. 634 – An Act Concerning Highway Worker Safety**

Good afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Charles Laus. I have worked for the Department of Transportation for 20 years and I am currently a Maintainer Four Carpenter for District Four Bridge Maintenance in Torrington. I appear before you today to ask you to support S.B. 634 – An Act Concerning Highway Worker Safety.

On June 23, 2007, I came as close to being killed as anyone could get when the crash truck on which I was working was struck by a careless driver. This accident occurred ten days after another accident sent two of my co-workers to the hospital; one was still hospitalized and the other required surgery. They were out of work for months.

During the ten days between the two accidents there was a conversation one afternoon among a group of my co-workers. Someone said, "Before we're finished [with our careers], one of us is going to be killed. Nothing is going to change. No one will ever do anything [to protect us]."

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, we were working on Route 8 southbound near Exit 29 in Waterbury. I was near the end of the work day and I had taken down the "Right Lane Closed" sign. I was going down the ladder on the driver's side of the truck when I saw a car coming straight toward me. There was no time to react. It was over before I even knew what happened.

The car was moving with the traffic, at approximately 50 miles per hour. The car hit the left corner of the truck, popped the tire and dislodged the rear wheels from the truck. It bent the ladder that I was standing on, struck my left foot, brushed my rear end, and then crossed the exit and rolled over. The conversation I had with my co-workers earlier was my only thought: "I'm going to be the one." I think about this accident every day. I'm so lucky to be alive today.

This was the fourth truck hit in a two-week period, statewide. There have been many more since and there will be many more unless someone does something soon. Without your help, the prediction of my coworkers will come to pass. I am here to testify today, but someone else may not be as fortunate as I. We need your help. Please don't let our blood be on your hands.

I strongly urge you to support S.B. 634.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I welcome any questions you may have.