

Good morning Senator Calapietro, Representative Shapiro and the other members of the General Law Committee. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak with you today regarding raised bill 6519 regarding Pawnbrokers and Precious Metals and Stones Dealers.

I am Detective Robert Allen of the West Hartford Police Department. I have worked for the Police Department for over 19 years and have served as a Detective for the past 3 1/2 years. During my time as a Detective, one of my assignments has been to monitor the Precious Metals and Stones dealers in the town of West Hartford. I have been responsible for reviewing their weekly reports as well as investigating property thefts that result in stolen property being sold to these dealers. My investigations in this capacity have resulted in recovering several stolen items at these dealers, but more often than not the property that can be traced to these dealers has already been transferred and/or destroyed by the time our investigation leads us to these dealers.

Most towns in the state don't have ordinances requiring a retention period for goods purchased by these dealers. West Hartford has an ordinance that requires a 10 day retention period which is too short of a time period. Many burglaries occur during times when homeowners are away on vacation and many people vacation for 10-14 days at a time. By the time the victim realizes that there has been a theft, these dealers have already transferred or destroyed the property. Too many victims of theft have had their property legally destroyed by these dealers when a simple amendment to this statute could avoid their property being destroyed and adding insult to their injury.

Many of the dealers that we encounter are aware of the criminal element that repeatedly come to their stores and fence stolen items. Even after we caution these dealers not to purchase property from known burglars and thieves, these businesses continue to buy jewelry from them. These businesses know that they can circumvent the system and make huge profits in dealing with stolen property as long as they are able to transfer stolen property from their stores before we are able to connect the property in their store to a crime. There are many legitimate dealers out there and this bill would help the legitimate dealers by eliminating the dealers with criminal intent. This bill would help to clean up the profession and bring credibility to these dealers. Ultimately, this bill would help me to recover more property for crime victims while also allowing me to properly Police the illegal fences that currently exist.

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to speak on behalf of raised bill 6519. I hope that you will support this bill.

  
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