Good morning, Chairman Dargan, Chairwoman Stillman, and Distinguished Members of the Public Safety and Security 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 BILLS NO. 6453

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DUTY OF MOTOR VEHICLES WHEN APPROACHING STATIONARY EMERGENCY VEHICLES.

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 20 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 roads. Each year our roadways become more and more congested. There is increased frequency of inattentive, unsafe and reckless driving. Traffic accidents and fatalities continue to plague our communities. As a society I think we all recognize how dangerous our roadways have become.

Public safety and highway maintenance personnel, as well as those tasked to assist the aforementioned personnel, are struck by vehicles on our highways frequently. They are confronted with these risks daily as part of their employment responsibilities, and 2008 was no exception.

A number of our Troopers were struck while performing their duties. There were some high profile cases as examples, along with many that were not as significant: In May Trooper Messenger was struck while in his vehicle in the breakdown lane of I-84 eastbound in Southington while issuing a traffic ticket, two weeks later Trooper Degali was struck while stopped in the travel lanes of I-84 eastbound in Watertown for a vehicle stopped in the roadway. In July Troopers LaPlante and Dowe were investigation an accident on I-84 in Hartford when they were struck and dragged by a vehicle. We must do more to protect our personnel on our highways. Since 1976, six of the seven Connecticut Trooper Line of Duty Deaths were by motor vehicles.

Last year the General Assembly made a commitment to highway workers and the motoring public by passing a highway work zone safety law. It is time to establish a "Move Over" law in Connecticut. Such a law will increase the safety of personnel and motorists on our highways, reducing the frequency of accidents, injuries and fatalities. Forty three states already have such a law. Our Troopers, public safety and highway workers appreciate your continued commitment in this area.

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.

CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION
Steven Rief, President

February 24, 2009