



# MADD

Activism | Victim Services | Education®

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## Testimony of Robin Cullen

### Before the Transportation Committee On Senate Bill 152

### “An Act Prohibiting Open Alcoholic Beverage Containers in Motor Vehicles” March 4, 2009

Thank you Chairman Donald DeFronzo, Co-Chairman Antonio Guerrero and members of the Transportation Committee for holding this important hearing and for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today in support of Senate Bill 152. I am Robin Cullen, Victim Impact Panel Coordinator for Mothers Against Drunk Driving in Connecticut.

In Connecticut, despite the efforts of law enforcement agencies, public policy makers, community leaders, the criminal justice system and MADD advocates, DUI state law is still not strong enough. Each month I see over 250 first time convicted DUI offenders for the court-mandated Victim Impact Panel (VIP). Alarming, over 20 of these DUI offenders each month are under the age of 21.

That is why MADD has launched a major new offensive in the war against drunk driving through its *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving*. The goal of the *Campaign* is simple, focused and possible: a nation without drunk driving. SB 152 is of critical importance to MADD CT – this proposed bill endorses the life-saving measures to stop open alcohol containers in vehicles. SB 152 endorses crucial changes to the current ineffective DUI general statute.

Drunk driving is serious and often deadly crime. Drunk driving is not an accident and many drunk drivers are serial offenders. The answer is tough DUI enforcement and tough and effective DUI sanctions. The Connecticut General Assembly must enact an Open Container Law. Open Container laws have a significant deterrent effect against driving under the influence for both drinkers in general and for high risk drinkers. Open Container laws work to deter drunk driving from happening and thus reduce drunk driving death and injury on our roadways. Eliminating open containers are part of the solution to eliminating DUI offenses.

On behalf of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, I respectfully request the Transportation Committee to support SB 152.

Thank you.