

Simsbury Fire District

871 Hopmeadow Street • Simsbury, Connecticut • 06070

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Testimony to the Committee on Public Safety
And Security

Members of the Public safety committee , Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today. I am Kevin Kowalski, Fire Marshal of Simsbury and I also represent the Ct Fire Marshal Association. I am here before you in support of House bill 6286, AA Shielding Fire Departments that install smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors from Liability.

Each year hundreds of people survive the ravages of fire because of a working smoke detector. Prior to the law requiring the installation of Smoke detectors by home builders and owners there were approximately 8000 fire related deaths nationwide each year ,The studies have shown that working smoke detectors have reduced that number to less than half. Unfortunately we are finding that in some cases the smoke detectors are not being maintained or are missing completely. Some Fire Departments have taken on programs to make sure their citizens have operating detectors. Most of these programs are free off charge are either supported by the communities through fund raising or through special programs from the Detector manufactures. In Simsbury we try not to leave a residence at a fire call without a properly operating smoke detector. In one case several years ago that very action resulted in the successful escape of a resident that awoke to a sounding detector because of a fire in her home.

Unfortunately some towns have shut these programs down after receiving interpretations from their town attorneys that they could be held liable as a result of an injury or death from a fire that had a properly installed detector. While these tort actions could be considered frivolous, the cost of the defense could be enormous.

Thank you for helping the fire service help the citizens of Connecticut