

March 4, 2009

Testimony from State Representative Christopher Wright on  
HB5260 – AAC “Blocking the Box”

Sen. DeFronzo, Rep. Guerrero and members of the Transportation Committee, for the record my name is Christopher Wright and I am the Representative from the 77<sup>th</sup> District in Bristol and I am here to comment on HB 5260, An Act Concerning Blocking the Box. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for raising this bill and allowing me to speak to you about it.

Let me start by briefly explaining what is meant by “blocking the box”. This is the term for when a motor vehicle enters an intersection and remains in the intersection after the light has changed and that vehicle no longer has the right of way. The result is that the vehicles which now do have the right of way cannot proceed and traffic comes to a standstill. The purpose of this bill is to discourage drivers from racing into intersections when there is no room for them to move through the intersection by making this action illegal and subjecting it to a civil penalty.

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My reason for bringing this bill before you is because this situation is endured everyday by the residents of my district at the intersection of Route 6, Farmington Avenue, and Stafford Avenue. At this location what happens is that vehicles driving South on Stafford have an advanced green arrow when making a left to travel East on Route 6. The problem that arises is that these vehicles then often have to stop at another light perhaps 100 or 200 yards down Route 6, causing a backup to Stafford Avenue. In an attempt to

get through this light, drivers will all too often line up in the intersection bumper to bumper even when it is clear that the traffic on Route 6 is not moving and that they will not be able to proceed through the intersection in the allotted time.

The result of this action is that the cars seeking to travel North on Stafford Avenue and also those wanting to make a right to travel East on Route 6 cannot move because there is a solid line of cars blocking the intersection. Even worse, often times these vehicles are still stuck in the intersection when the light for Route 6 turns green, preventing movement in any direction. This creates a very dangerous situation where cars are often trying to drive around each other and through this line of cars in an attempt to get through the intersection. It is not uncommon at all for accidents to happen in this intersection, necessitating Police, Fire and even Ambulance response.

This is just one example of the problems that are caused when drivers proceed into intersections that they know they cannot get through in their allotted time. I am sure that many of you have similar intersections where you come from. This seems like such a common sense solution that I was surprised to learn that there is no law against it. This is an oversight that I hope this legislature will fix this session.

In closing, I should state that this legislation need not apply to every intersection in the state. As is the case with the No Turn on Red law, I would suggest that the State Traffic Commission designate which locations this legislation should and should not apply to in order to ensure uniform application of the law. Thank you for your time.