MTAC MOTOR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

MICHAEL J. RILEY
PRESIDENT

Statement of Michael J. Riley
President
Motor Transport Association of Connecticut
Before
The Joint Committee on Transportation
March 4, 2009

Re: Senate Bill No. 5260 AN ACT PROHIBITING BLOCKING THE BOX

I am Michael J. Riley, President of Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC), a statewide trade association, which represents around 1,000 companies that operate commercial motor vehicles in and through the state of Connecticut. Our membership includes freight haulers, movers of household goods, construction companies, distributors, tank truck operators and hundreds of companies that use trucks in their business and firms that provide goods and services to truck owners.

MTAC OPPOSES THIS BILL

SB. No. 139. AN ACT PROHIBITING BLOCKING THE BOX is a well intentioned bill which presents unique problems to the trucking industry. It prohibits a motor vehicle from entering an intersection unless there is sufficient space on the opposite side of the intersection to accommodate such motor vehicle without obstructing the passage of other vehicles or pedestrians, notwithstanding the indication of a traffic control signal that would permit such operator to proceed.

The standard over-the-road trailer is 53 feet long. Tractors can be 15 to 25 feet long creating a combination of 60 to 75 feet in length. It is not uncommon for a tractor-trailer to cross an intersection in a line of other vehicles. The truck driver cannot predict that someone in that line might turn into the intersection and then take a quick left or right into a business or a side street. When this happens, all vehicles behind the turning vehicle must stop. It is possible that the trucker may not have totally cleared the intersection quickly, in this circumstance. He really hasn't done anything wrong but would be subject to an infraction under this proposal.

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If a tractor-trailer driver actually did wait until traffic cleared on the other side of the intersection, it is very possible that the light could change and a significant backup of traffic could result.

We have a major problem with congested roads. This bill would make the situation worse.

We understand the problem contemplated by this bill, however, we really believe that the cure would be worse than the disease.

We also do not believe that a general law regulating every intersection in the state is necessary. If there are specific problem areas, the State Traffic Commission should study the situation and make recommendations, possibly including signage, which warns drivers against "blocking the box".

There is no evidence that this state has a major problem with people "blocking the box". It is unnecessary to pass this law.

Thank you.