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In support of SB 179 AA Requiring Continual 9-1-1 Service

Good afternoon, Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, and honorable members of the Energy and Technology Committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of **SB 179 AN ACT REQUIRING CONTINUAL 9-1-1 SERVICE**, a concept I proposed last session as well. The bill before you today is a matter of public safety and common sense. Passage of this bill will require landline telephone companies to provide 9-1-1 service to customers who have had their lines disconnected due to non-payment. While I don't ordinarily advocate in favor of more rules for businesses, I believe this is a unique situation where we can pass legislation that will result in little hardship for phone companies but produce tremendous results for the people of Connecticut.

Experiencing a medical emergency, a fire, or an incident requiring emergency response is traumatic and people in these situations are often already confused and upset, not to mention in desperate need of help. Access to emergency services can truly be a matter of life and death and people need the peace of mind that they will be able to get the help they need.

The issue was brought to my attention several years ago by a constituent whose aunt had been in a dangerous medical situation without access to 9-1-1 service. Even more recently, an out of state woman died after she dialed 9-1-1 from a cell phone during a medical emergency. The medical condition left her confused and she gave the operator the wrong address, and even though her cell phone had Global Positioning System emergency officials were unable to track her exact location. If that home had mandatory 9-1-1 service she might still be alive today. I want to ensure that this situation does not occur here in CT.

California's Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) requires phone companies to provide do-not-disconnect 9-1-1 service. I hope that we will follow their lead and improve the public safety for people in Connecticut.

Thank you for taking the time to consider SB 179 AN ACT REQUIRING CONTINUAL 9-1-1 SERVICE. I think this is a common sense measure that will protect vulnerable residents during times of great need. I hope the committee will report this bill favorably out of the committee. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.