

Chairman and members of the Committee:

My name is Louise Astin. I am from Middletown; I am here to speak in support of Proposed Bill Number **HB5256** entitled: **An Act Concerning Local Appeals of Decisions of Traffic Authorities.**

One decision by our Traffic Authority (the Police Chief) has completely altered our lives for the worse. I am from Wesleyan Hills, which was one of the first large planned communities in the country with a total tax base of \$63,000,000.00.

During the past two or more years, residents in our neighborhood have been dealing with an ongoing and as yet unresolved situation involving a disputed decision of Middletown's Traffic Authority, the city's Police Chief. The decision in question is that of creating a No Parking zone over a short section of Long Hill Road that serves an area of about 200 condominium units. Each condo complex has limited guest parking. For well over 30 years, overflow guest parking was done on the west side of Long Hill Road with no apparent problems until the Middletown Police Chief moved into one of the condos, and ticketing of apparently legally parked vehicles. The situation has escalated to a point that the portion of Long Hill Road that serves the condo area is now a total No Parking zone with bright yellow painted curbs.

When the ticketing started, we began working with our City Councilman, David Bauer, to try to stop the ticketing and ultimately to try to stop the establishment of the No Parking zone. We met with Middletown Mayor Sebastian Giuliano on January 10, 2008. Mayor Giuliano assured us he would speak with the Police Chief, and he said he did not know why the Chief would make a problem where there wasn't one.

We brought the situation to the attention of former State Representative Ray Kalinowski, who talked with the Mayor and the Police Chief to no avail, and to the attention of State Representative Matt Lesser, also.

In October, 2008 a petition with 120 signatures was presented to the Mayor, to no effect.

Both the Wesleyan Hills Association Board of Directors and the Wesleyan Hills Council voted to support our efforts to return parking to the west side of Long Hill Road.

Through Councilman David Bauer, we submitted FOI requests on December 2, 2008, to obtain the Wesleyan Hills PRD documents. The original plan approved the narrow road in order to keep the area neighborly and residential. We also requested all documentation from the Police Department as to why this part of Long Hill Road should be a total No Parking Zone. Planning and Zoning was unable to locate the documents as specified in our request. The Police Department documents contained nothing that would justify their cited "safety concerns." In fact, what stands out boldly because of omissions, inaccuracies and irrelevancies, is that the Police Chief's assertions are not backed up by any documentation. For instance, a traffic study had been mentioned, we requested the information and results of this traffic study; there apparently was no traffic study as there are no documents describing one. All evidence in the Police Department FOI materials points to the police initiating and pursuing the establishment of the No Parking zone.

There has been no meaningful explanation as to why this tiny portion of Long Hill Road became the focus of attention from the Police Department. There were never any problems or questions about parking on the west side of the road until the Police Chief moved into the neighborhood. This portion of Long Hill Road is not a major thoroughfare; it basically serves the condo area.

Thank you.