

Statement of William Cornish, owner of Cornish Contracting and Real Estate and owner and operator of Copperwood Grill, in Favor of Raised Bill No. 5236 – An Act Concerning An Additional Off Track Betting Facility in New London.

March 4, 2010

Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of Raised Bill No. 5236, An Act Concerning An Additional Off Track Betting Facility in New London, which would simply allow the New London City Council and The Division of Special Revenue the ability to make a decision concerning simulcasting/ live video display of the races in my restaurant located at 24 Eugene O'Neil Drive in New London.

I am currently building out a vacant storefront in a 4,000 square foot space in downtown New London. I am creating a new restaurant that will be called The Copperwood Grill. It will feature burgers, sandwiches and will become a great neighborhood sports bar. As one of its features people will be able to play the races.

This added entertainment will be an attraction that will help support my business. The Copperwood Grill will be a destination, drawing new people to downtown. I would not have built the restaurant without the addition of racing, because the restaurant industry is extremely difficult and having this feature will be an added attraction and help us compete.

Of course, being able to show the races is critical. People want to watch the races. It would be like going to the movies and only being allowed to hear the soundtrack and not see the picture. I'm not sure that makes any sense.

I am totally invested in downtown New London. I have lived in the city my entire life, except for an eight year stint in the Air Force. I have served on numerous boards and have actively worked to improve and make New London a better place to work and live. I own and manage seven commercial buildings which in many instances meant refurbishing them in order to transform them into marketable properties.

The new restaurant will create 25 new jobs. These are new jobs and very important in these dire economic times. In addition, this new business will generate new property and sales tax revenue. Autotote, Inc. has estimated that New London will receive approximately \$64,000 in additional tax revenue. Allowing the New London City Council the opportunity to consider simulcasting/ live video display is an economic generator and it is important that it pass.

I ask for your full support of Raised Bill No. 5236 and again thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.