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Testimony to the Committee on Transportation
March 3, 2010 by
Chiefs Anthony Salvatore and James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

Senator DeFronzo, Representative, Guerrera, and Committee members, we speak for Connecticut police chiefs on several bills. Three of them concern the use of technology to combat hazardous traffic violations.

SB#345, AA Authorizing Municipalities To Conduct A Pilot Program For The Use Of Automated Traffic Control Signal Enforcement Devices At Certain Intersections would let towns install cameras to photograph red-light runners and mail them citations, to be paid or contested in the same manner as parking tickets. The program would be limited to two years and twelve posted locations per town; each town's plan must be approved by DPS and the results reported to the General Assembly. The municipality would bear all costs but would split the fines with the state.

We hope the many safeguards incorporated in the bill will allow even the skeptics to give this program a chance. It will save lives.

SB# 346, AAC The Installation Of Speed Detecting Cameras On Highways would allow automated speed-enforcement devices on state roads to measure a violator's speed, photograph the car and the tag number. An officer would review the image and mail a ticket. Automated enforcement has reduced crashes and improved safety in other states and in many other countries. Although we would like to see this enforcement extended to local roads, it's a good start.

HB#5384, AA Prohibiting Open Alcoholic Beverage Containers In Motor Vehicles, will bring the state into conformance with federal standards. Because drinking and driving don't mix, we now prohibit driving under the influence and drinking while driving. This bill will further separate the acts of drinking and driving, with some common-sense exceptions.

HB#5385, AAC Use of Ignition Interlock Devices In Motor Vehicles, would allow instead of a one-year license suspension for a first DUI conviction, the option of a six-month license suspension plus a year of operation only if using an interlock device.

The advantage to the driver is that he'd be allowed to drive sooner, get back to work sooner, and contribute to the economy sooner, as long as he's sober. The advantage to public safety is that an IID actually prevents a motorist from driving drunk, while a suspended license merely makes driving illegal, drunk or sober. We support this bill.

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