



# CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

342 North Main Street, West Hartford, Connecticut 06117-2507

(860) 586-7506 Fax: (860) 586-7550 Web site: [www.cpcanet.org](http://www.cpcanet.org)

## Testimony to the Committee on Transportation

March 12, 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 in strong support of **SB#427, AAC Hand-held Mobile Telephones and Mobile Electronic Devices by Motor Vehicle Operators** addresses the growing hazard of distracted driving.

Section 1 (b)(1) would specify that the ban on phoning while driving covers text messaging as well. Texting while driving is far riskier than phoning, as it takes not only the driver's attention but his eyes off the road.

A study by the Transport Research Laboratory showed that driving while texting was more dangerous than drunk driving.\* The National Safety Council estimates that a minimum of 200,000 crashes each year are caused by drivers who are texting.\*\*

Section 1(g) repeals the "freebie" provision--suspension of the fine for a first-time violator who buys a hands-free device--which was a merciful gesture when the ban was new and not yet well-known, but whose time may be past. It also increases the fine for first and subsequent transactions.

Section 1(j) sensibly adds a penalty for a violation which results in a crash.

Section 1(k) would remit to the issuing municipality one-fourth of fines paid for violations. This would support local enforcement activities.

We are not winning the battle against distracted driving. Connecticut drivers had years to get habituated to driving while phoning before it was prohibited by Public Act 05-159; neither enforcement nor public appeal have made a dent in that habit. We hope that his bill will get drivers' attention, and get their attention back on the road.

\*<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/driving/news/article4776063.ece> .

\*\*<http://www.nsc.org/Pages/NSCestimates16millioncrashescausedbydriversusingcellphonesandtexting.aspx> .