



MADD

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Testimony of Johanna Krebs

Before the Environment Committee On Senate Bill 272 “An Act Concerning Drunk Boating” March 8, 2010

Thank you Co-Chairman Ed Meyers, Co-Chairman Richard Roy and members of the Environment Committee for holding this important hearing and for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today in support of Senate Bill 272. I am Johanna Krebs, Victim Advocate and Court Monitoring Specialist for Mothers Against Drunk Driving in Connecticut.

In Connecticut, despite the efforts of law enforcement agencies, public policy makers, community leaders, the criminal justice system and MADD advocates, DUI state law for boating operators is quite in-adequate. On July 8, 2007 Gregory Seige's 20-foot motorboat was circling full-throttle at 38 mph, when it collided with the 14-foot sailboat carrying two couples. Susan Brandes, 52, a chemical engineer at United Technologies Corp., sustained fatal traumatic injuries, including a severed arm. This was witnessed by her husband Leland and the Spector couple who also sustained serious injuries. The drunk boater plead no contest to second-degree manslaughter. Herein lies the problem – Seige's blood -alcohol content was 0.17 percent two hours and 10 minutes after the crash. DEP officials missed the two-hour time limit for administering the urine test to Seige by 10 minutes. A judge ruled that the results of the urinalysis could not be used to prosecute Seige for boating under the influence.

MADD respectfully requests that the Environment Committee support SB 272 by allowing an extension of time over the current two hour limit to test suspected boating DUI operators. The difficulty of delivering that suspected drunk driving boater to land/dock for testing may be delayed due to water conditions, falling overboard, waiting for Sea Tow, engine failure etc. On behalf of Susan Brandes, her surviving husband Leland and the Spectors it is the least that the Connecticut Legislature can do.

Thank you.