



State of Connecticut

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Testimony of Michael Alevy
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Raised Bill No. 965

**An Act Concerning the Use of an Ignition Interlock Device Upon a First
Drunken Driving Conviction**

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing - March 18, 2011

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports passage of *Raised Bill No. 965, An Act Concerning the Use of an Ignition Interlock Device Upon a First Drunken Driving Conviction*. The bill amends section 14-227a, *Operation Under the Influence*, with respect to the penalties that must be imposed by the court upon a first conviction of this offense. Currently, the statute requires that the operators' license of a person convicted be suspended for one year. The raised bill allows the court, as an alternative, to reduce the period of license suspension to three months and thereafter prohibit, for the nine month period following completion of that suspension, a person from operating a motor vehicle unless the vehicle is equipped with a functioning, approved ignition interlock device.

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports implementation of the proposed alternative license suspension provision. Such a provision will permit a sentencing court to exercise its discretion in appropriate cases. A reduction in the suspension period may be appropriate to permit a convicted person the ability to maintain or seek employment or educational opportunities as well as maintain potential obligations regarding the care of children, family or others. At the same time public safety considerations can be met by requiring that any motor vehicle operation take place within the constraints and under the control of an ignition interlock system. For these reasons this Office supports this bill.