

SB 1031

My Name is Angela Loprete. Thank you Co-Chair Coleman and Co-Chair Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee for giving me this opportunity to share my horrific story that happened to me and my family and to support proposed bills to increase penalties on manslaughter with a motor vehicle.

What I'm about to tell you no parent needs to go through a devastating nightmare that you can't wake up from. My daughter Maryann Loprete, 27 years old shy of 2 weeks from her 28th birthday, was taken away from us on January 28th 2010. The drunk driver was three times above the legal limit of .08.

At 5 am our doorbell rang. I thought I was dreaming. A police officer comes in and tells us that our daughter was in an automobile crash, and she did not make it. Imagine a parent hearing such news. I kept looking at him in disbelief. My heart and all of my insides have been ripped apart, a little piece at a time, each and every day. I am still in total shock even after a year; it is hard to imagine a year has passed by without my daughter.

My family and I were present month after month to appear in court to have the case continued over and over. The driver has gone on with his life, traveling and putting pictures on his web site, while ours has been on hold since that January morning.

On March 7, 2011, we appeared in court, and a sentence of 8 years execution suspended after 3 ½ years to serve with 3 years of probation was given. We were stunned; a life has been taken away, and he gets 3 ½ years in prison. Does the State of Connecticut not realize a precious life has been taken away? Where is the justice? Someone drives drunk, kills someone and gets a slap on the wrist.

Having a driver's license is a responsibility, not a privilege. A vehicle driven by someone under the influence is a lethal weapon; what is the difference between this and a loaded gun?

The driver is in jail for 3 ½ years; he has access to the library, watching TV, the gym, computers and 3 square meals, while our lives have changed. Holidays, anniversaries, or any other family function does not mean anything anymore. My husband will not have the honor to walk our daughter down the aisle or have grandchildren. Imagine the pain that we are both feeling. I will never see my beautiful daughter reach her potential. My daughter excelled in school, graduated with honors from Central Connecticut State University. Her goals were to work with the homeless and become a writer. I will never see that. My family was robbed of all the joys.

Our sentence is for a lifetime, not just for 3 1/2 years. I feel that the penalties for manslaughter with a motor vehicle need to be increased. It doesn't matter if it was a first offense or a third; one time is too many. Getting behind the wheel of a 5,000 pound car intoxicated clearly demonstrates a person's lack of cognitive skills. They are actively and recklessly engaging in conduct that puts everyone's life at risk. Therefore I am asking, on behalf of my daughter Maryann and the thousands of others killed every year, to raise the penalties of manslaughter with a motor vehicle so no other family has to endure the pain that we have.

Thank you.

Angela Loprete