



State of Connecticut

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL**

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SIXTY-SEVENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5490
An Act Limiting the Use of Emergency Notification Systems**

**Public Safety and Security Committee Public Hearing
February 22, 2011**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 5490, An Act Limiting the Use of Emergency Notification Systems. This legislation is intended to clarify the instances when it is permissible for information collected by a public safety answering point to be used as part of an emergency notification system.

In 2009, PA 9-86 defined 'emergency notification system' as 'a service that notifies the public of an emergency.' While the act itself failed to provide a definition for 'emergency', the public act summary referred to 'life-threatening' situations. I wholeheartedly agree that such systems should only be used in life-threatening instances.

I'm sure that many of us have either been the recipients of such calls or read about their controversial use in other towns and cities. I'm aware of instances where these systems have been used to notify residents of not only nonlife-threatening situations, but also in the following instances which could be considered non-emergencies: burglaries, budget meetings and referendums, street closures for car shows, highway closures due to flooding, notification that polls would be open additional hours for an election, and notification of blasting in an area. At best, some of these instances are merely informational.

It is important to note that I have no objection to permitting the use of the emergency notification system for non-life-threatening situations or informational purposes provided municipalities allow people to sign up for such notifications. By providing an opt-in opportunity, residents who value their privacy and who prefer to limit unwanted calls will be spared from these calls in nonlife-threatening situations.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 5490. As always, I am happy to provide additional information or answer any questions.