

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for considering our comments on this matter.

My name is Ingrid Metell, the mother of Joshua Metell. I am strongly in support of both of the bills HB-6142 and HB-6143. I live in North Windham.

My husband Dennis Metell has echoed a lot of my thoughts and concerns, as well as has my daughter Rhema Metell.

My son, Joshua, was an awesome young man with so much to offer to so many people. He was a peacemaker, intelligent, focused and had many goals to fulfill. We were an amazingly close family and still are even after this terrible tragedy. His accomplishments were so many for someone so young. We've heard so many times that he did more in 28 years than many do in a lifetime. Approximately thirteen hundred people came through the wake, celebrating his life which had a huge impact on theirs.

Josh's memory and life has been honored in many ways. June 9, 2008 was declared "Josh Metell Day" in Willimantic. On this day, a tree was planted and a memorial stone was set with the inscription: "You've made a difference in so many ways, in our hearts your memory stays". Joshua also received the "Teacher of the Year" award for the year of 2008. Joshua had plans to enter a master's degree program and wanted to become a principal. He said he wanted to "Be responsible for the lives and progress on thousands of children". Joshua had already begun the journey to accomplishing that goal. His purpose was to positively influence both students and teachers.

On April 18, 2008, my son, Joshua, was tragically and suddenly taken from my family and I in a crash that could have been prevented. We were devastated by the huge loss of our son. As Josh's mom I lost a part of myself, a part of me died that day. He was irreplaceable.

The man, who caused this crash, was driving under suspension. He had no legal right to drive on the roads that day. My family and I had seen him driving so many times. It brought so much pain to see this man driving wherever he wanted, under illegal circumstances, after his negligence caused Josh's untimely death. He was disregarding the law, showing such disdain for the loss of life we experienced and showing no sign of remorse. For instance, he "drove" up our friend's driveway because he was interested in some scrap metal, which seemed to be his occupation. He left his name, address and phone number with her, not knowing that she was a friend of ours. This was after the crash that took Joshua's life. His arrests never included Josh's death. He was never made accountable.

David Vertefeuille made a reckless decision to become the driver of a vehicle with a suspended license. If he had obeyed the law that day, my son would still be alive. It adds insult to the injury we have suffered, to realize that the laws were not in place to put this man behind bars for this offence sooner and longer. We all left frustrated, the states

attorney, the state police and us as a family to realize that all he had to spend in jail was 8 months and was let out in 5 months on house arrest. Please consider making the changes to help mandate the stricter laws.

Respectfully,

Ingrid Metell