

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCATE  
505 HUDSON STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

Michelle S. Cruz, Esq.  
State Victim Advocate

**Testimony of Michelle Cruz, Esq., State Victim Advocate  
Submitted to the Public Safety and Security Committee  
Tuesday, February 22, 2011**

Good afternoon Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. For the record, my name is Michelle Cruz and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning:

**House Bill No. 5494, *An Act Permitting Local Police to Charge for Motor Vehicle Accident or Investigative Reports (Proposed amendment)***

**House Bill No. 6269, *An Act Concerning the Availability of Accident Records of the State Police (Proposed amendment)***

One of the most common problems experienced by crime victims involved in a motor vehicle in which another motor vehicle operator has been charged or summoned in connection with the accident is the timely availability of the accident report or other investigative reports. Many insurance companies require a copy of the police accident report prior to the filing of a claim with the insurance company, whether it is the victim's insurance carrier or the other operator's insurance carrier. Additionally, in some complex instances, the investigative process may take many months to complete thereby leaving the crime victim paralyzed to utilize the benefits of insurance coverage to repair their vehicle.

House Bill No. 6269 seeks to improve the availability of accident reports to those persons involved in the accident. However, the proposal limits the timely availability of such reports to accident investigations conducted by the State Police. To ensure that crime victims have timely access to the accident report or other investigative reports regardless of whether the State Police or a municipal police department are conducting the accident investigation, the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) respectfully requests that the proposal be further amended to extend this requirement to municipal police departments as well.

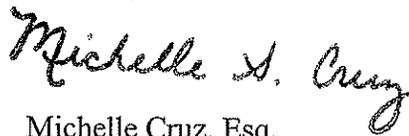
Likewise, House Bill No. 5494 seeks to allow municipal police departments to charge a fee for obtaining an accident report akin to the State Police. Crime victims involved in a motor vehicle accident where it has been determined that the other motor vehicle operator is at fault should not be penalized and charged with obtaining a copy of the accident report or other investigative reports relating to that accident. As a result of the accident itself, the crime victim may suffer lost wages for time away from work, rental car expenses and an increase to their insurance premium, especially in cases where the operator at fault does not have adequate insurance coverage. The crime victim

should not be burdened further, even with a nominal fee for obtaining a copy of the police accident report or other investigative reports. Perhaps, rather than charging the victim for the cost of the accident report, there could be an additional fee imposed on the operator at fault, such as \$25.00, to be directed to the municipal police department to cover the cost of such reports.

Therefore, the OVA respectfully requests that the proposal be further amended to exempt crime victims, which have been determined to not be at fault for the accident, from the cost to obtain a copy of the report.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle S. Cruz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Michelle Cruz, Esq.  
State Victim Advocate