



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD

Police Department

March 28, 2012

To: Joint Committee on Judiciary
State of Connecticut
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

From: John S. Roche
Chief of Police
Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut

Subj: Substitute Bill No. 5360

Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

I am respectfully requesting the Committee modify Substitute Bill No. 5360. The bill, as it stands, challenges Law Enforcement to accomplish the goal of this law; to hold accountable persons responsible for providing alcoholic beverages to underage persons.

The phrase inserted in paragraph (a), "while being physically present in such dwelling unit or on such private property", adds an element to the law which had not existed in the past. This element of Bill 5360 should be deleted from the bill's content.

In the same Paragraph (a), under Sections One (1) and Two (2), the words "recklessly or with criminal negligence" are added. This additional language will better law enforcement's efforts in appropriately enforcing those situations when police officers respond to Calls for Service involving underage drinking.

In Paragraph B, the elimination of the phrase, "for a first offense, have committed an Infraction and for any subsequent offense", is an important step put forth by the Joint Committee on general law; I concur with this action.

In over 32 years as a law enforcement officer, I have been a part of the efforts to prevent tragedy caused by underage persons consuming alcoholic beverages and the resulting consequences.

Community Policing is defined as a partnership between the police and law-abiding citizens to create permanent solutions to problems and thereby enhance the quality of life in the Community.

Partnerships have been formed through community coalitions, educational programs and enforcement efforts to help prevent and educate our Communities on the dangers inherent to alcoholic beverages and underage consumption. Connecticut has seen the sad and unnecessary tragedies which take place when underage persons and alcoholic beverages connect.

The opportunity presents itself for our legislature to better form this law, a solution which will not deprive the rights of our Communities but improve the application of the law by holding those persons accountable for enabling underage persons to consume and/or possess alcoholic beverages.

I urge the Joint Committee on Judiciary to examine the amended Substitute Bill No.5360, attached hereto, make the recommended changes to this document, and support the Legislature to enact this important law.

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