



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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**Testimony of Michelle Cruz, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
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Good afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and distinguished members of the Judiciary 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:

Raised House Bill No. 5507, An Act Concerning Operation of a Truck in Violation of a Traffic Control Regulation and the Issuance of Enhanced Recognition Number Plates.

License plates were first created in MA in 1903. For the most part, our nation's license's plates have remained the same over this years; six or eight numbers and/or letters with some variation in each state of vanity plates.

There is an illusion in our society that if we try hard enough, we can remember a license plate, if crime impacts our lives. This legislative session CT has turn a corner in eye witness identification as a result of studies indicating that our memories can be tampered with through our unconscious. The reality is that very few if any, witnesses to abductions, drunk driving accidents, and hit and runs, can recollect a six or eight digit license plate with numbers and letters. Add in viewing these plates in a rear view mirror, the numbers become zero.

The concept behind EZ ID is based upon the premise that anyone can identify a shape such as a circle, a box or a diamond- shapes that don't change in a rear view mirror and shapes that children learn before they learn letters and numbers. The statistics which you will hear from Gary Richards who invented the concept and Jay Gardiner, the Executive Director of the Molly Bish Foundation, establish that with the supplement of shapes into license plates the ability to recollect a license plate increases exponentially, while at the same time, the ability to identify the car, is enhanced to a reasonable number of vehicles. This enhances the safety of our children and law enforcements ability to recover an abducted child, capture a drunk driver who has left the scene and secure a hit and run driver.

The Amber Alert by definition involves a child abduction involving a motor vehicle. According to the

- **797,500** children (younger than 18) were reported missing in a one-year period of time studied resulting in an average of 2,185 children being reported missing each day.
- **203,900** children were the victims of family abductions.

- 58,200 children were the victims of non-family abductions.
- 115 children were the victims of "stereotypical" kidnapping. (These crimes involve someone the child does not know or someone of slight acquaintance, who holds the child overnight, transports the child 50 miles or more, kills the child, demands ransom, or intends to keep the child permanently.)

According to a study conducted by the Attorney General in Washington State, "in 76 percent of the missing children homicide cases studied, the child was dead within three hours of the abduction—and in 88.5 percent of the cases the child was dead within 24 hours."

The EZ ID will enhance the ability of the public to quickly identify the plate of the abductor while at the same time, enhance the public's ability to recall the plate and assist in apprehension of the abductor. In child abductions we are talking about saving a child's innocence and, in some cases, the child's life. Swift apprehension is vital to a child's recovery and intercepting the harm that could fall upon a child whose not quickly recovered and brought home.

Costs- I can tell you that the cost that we are meeting with the Commissioner of DMV this week. I can also tell you that a 5 – 7 year implementation would allow for natural plate turn over to take up some of the costs. Additionally, with the addition of shapes such as diamonds or dollar signs, the state will increase the ability to maximize on vanity plates through the use of the shapes. For example "Diamond Girl" or "Big Money".

As with any shift in the way we do things, there is always hesitation. It's expected. But think about the lives that could be saved. It's rare that any one Bill can increase revenue and at the same time, enhance public safety. It's worth a second look.
Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



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