

March 29, 2012

William J. Riordan  
2 Park Place Apt 24F  
Hartford, CT 06106

re: Raised Bill No. 5553 "An Act Concerning Substance Abuse Programs"

Mr. Chairman:

My testimony today endorses the Bill that is before you: I would like to make a particular plea regarding Sections 3 and 4, the reinstatement of the multiple offender drunken driving program, also known as 14-227f of the general statutes, which was repealed as of 12/31/2011.

While I am certainly in favor of the imposition of an Ignition Interlock System on multiple DUI offenders, my experience tells me that without a concurrent program addressing the violator's abuse of, or dependence upon alcohol, the likelihood of behavioral change in the future seems unlikely at best. Section # 3 would allow for the multiple offender program (14-227f) to be reinstated basically and address this need. There certainly must be a designated program for the treatment of this chronic population, i.e., the multiple drunken driving offender.

I have been involved with the Pretrial Alcohol Education Programs in Connecticut for over 15 years. As executive director of PACES Counseling Associates, one of the pretrial program providers, I can state with confidence that as a result of their participation, the majority of our clients have recognized their high risk behavior and made appropriate changes.

Despite our best efforts, some clients will be re-arrested for DUI. At the outset of each group, we tell the clients that at least one person in the group will have a second arrest within a year. These clients tend to look around the room trying to figure out who the likely offender will be. These clients never seem to think that it could be them. Sadly, some will be re-arrested before they even complete the program.

That being said, if second, or more, offenders are allowed to drive with an ignition interlock device, but without further assessment and education, the likelihood of further recidivism seems to be that much greater. All of the clinical research indicates this. There needs to be a program such as 14-227f to compliment and run concurrent with the IID installation.

I have been told by clients who have attended the multiple offender program in question that they "wished they had taken the first arrest and the pretrial program seriously." They say that they "have now had a serious wake-up call" and gained some insight into their situation. Offering this program to augment the use of the ignition interlock can only increase their chances of future success.

It has been disappointing for me to hear that a reported 20,000 or more multiple offenders who had been mandated to do this program, but never did, are apparently now being given a "pass" in the form of license reinstatement, if they just pay a reinstatement fee of \$175.00. It seems that bad behavior is being rewarded. This is a safety hazard and a catastrophe just waiting to happen on the roadways.

I sincerely request that you give your full consideration to the reestablishment of 14-227f. As a result, you will very likely be helping to save the lives of potential victims of intoxicated drivers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. J. Riordan", written in a cursive style.

William J. Riordan, CAC, ICADC