

Testimony for Connecticut House Bill 5394

Presented by Ronald R. Farr

Good afternoon members of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Ronald Farr and I am here today to speak to HB 5394. I am employed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) as a Lead Regulatory Engineer. UL is a worldwide company with a mission of working for a safer world. As a part of my responsibilities I am task with providing information and education regarding smoke alarms. Information such as types of fires a person could expect to encounter in a one and two family dwelling, types of smoke alarms, placement, and maintenance of smoke alarms to make sure they function, information regarding the listing process for smoke alarms and detectors, as well as providing general fire safety information for the consumer.

I have more than 40 years in the fire service, serving as a Firefighter, Fire Marshal and Fire Chief of a department in the Kalamazoo, Michigan area. I have also served as the State Fire Marshal for Michigan, Served as the Chair of the State of Michigan Fire Safety Board and an active participant in many state and national fire safety committees and organizations prior to my employment with UL. As a result I feel I can be considered an authority on fire prevention.

Fire is a concern for all of us. We never know when one will strike so we much be prepared.

Statistics have shown that we will be negatively impacted by at least two significant fires during our lifetime. We may also be impacted by others much small that we have dealt with ourselves without fire service intervention.

If a fire occurs early warning is critical. We are not always in visual contact when and where a fire starts so we rely on smoke alarms to give us that critical early warning that there is an emergency and to exit to safety.

The most common types of fires to occur in a residential occupancy are quick burning fires such as a cooking fire in the kitchen or paper that has ignited and slow smoldering fires that take a period of time before open flame appears. As a note, the National Fire Protection Association fire statistics list kitchen fires as the cause of the majority of home fires. As there are two types of fires there are two basic types of smoke alarms, Ionization and Photoelectric. Both alarms are responsive to both types of fires and meet the criteria that have been established for approval as a "listed smoke alarm".

There are more than 40 performance requirements that have been established by the UL 217 Standards Technical Committee are found in UL Standards 217 for Safety for Single and Multiple Station Smoke Alarms that a smoke alarm must pass to be listed by UL. There is also a Standard identified as UL 268 for Smoke Detectors.

In reading your legislation there is language that gives focus on photoelectric smoke alarms. It is UL's recommendation that a home owner have both types of alarms that are placed in accordance with codes and manufacture recommendations. The key point to remember whether you have an ionization

or photoelectric smoke alarm, they both will perform equally as well if they meet the established requirements in UL 217 or UL 268.

If you were to ask me what types of alarms I have I would respond...both....as I want the best opportunity of notification possible for my family in the event of a fire.

I would like to offer the following amendment to your legislation to be inserted after the word "be" in section 1-a (2), sixth line that would read:

"tested and certified, pursuant to requirements of the American National Standards Institutes (ANSI) and Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) as set forth in either ANSI/UL 217 or ANSI/UL 268, or successor standards.

"Listed" properly installed, working smoke alarms do save lives.

Thank you for your time.