



CITY OF STAMFORD
OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH & WELFARE
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**Testimony of Director of Public Safety, Health and Welfare,
Thaddeus K. Jankowski Concerning HB 5394
Public Safety and Security Committee
March 6, 2012**

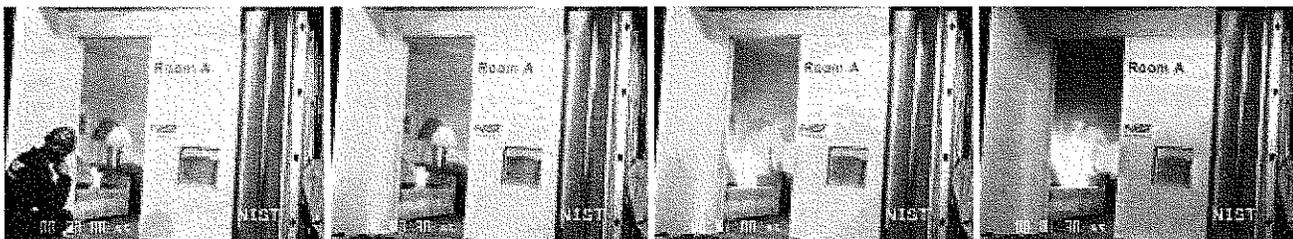
Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee my name is Thaddeus Jankowski and I am the Director of Public Safety, Health and Welfare for the City of Stamford. My professional experience and background encompasses over 23 years of fire service and safety experience with the New York City Fire Department. I am here today to respectfully urge your support for HB 5394, an Act Concerning Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors and Alarms in Residential Buildings.

In my 23 years of firefighting and safety experience, I have seen many needless deaths related to fire and carbon monoxide poisoning. I have experienced firsthand the importance of having properly functioning Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors and Alarms in residential buildings. Most fire victims die from smoke inhalation or toxic gases and not from burns.

Fire statistics over the last five years have averaged 376,000 residential building fires, 2,600 civilian fire deaths and approximately 13,000 civilian fire injuries. Many fire deaths occur during the hours when people are sleeping. Contrary to popular belief, the smell of smoke may not wake a sleeping person. The poisonous gases and smoke produced by a fire can numb the senses and put the individual into a deeper sleep. Smoke detection and warning is necessary. Almost all households in the U.S. have at least one smoke detector but most fire deaths occur in home fires that do not have working smoke alarms.

To depict how fast a fire grows in intensity and the need for early detection, I am utilizing the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) March 1996 test. NIST timed fire growth in a 12' X 8' high living room furnished with a sofa, love seat, end table, lamp and carpeting. The stages of fire growth are:

Incipient Stage (0 sec) Incipient stage (30 sec) Growth Stage (60 sec) Growth Stage (90 sec)



Growth stage (120 sec)

Growth stage (150 sec)

Fully developed (180 sec)

Fully Developed (210 sec)



In this test direct flame was used, however, many fires smolder and the incipient stage lasts for a longer duration of time. As a fire progresses from the incipient stage (which lasts longer for smoldering fires), into and through the growth stage, the fire increases in its intensity. It becomes more precarious to exit a fire safely. In this fire test where they used direct flame to ignite the sofa, the smoke detector activated in less than 40 seconds, approximately during the incipient stage of the fire. In fires that are smoldering a photoelectric smoke detector is more effective for detection and is more likely to alert occupants in time to escape. Smoldering fires have been attributed to more fires involving death.

The time it took for the fire to progress from the incipient to the fully developed stage, when all combustible materials have been ignited was approximately three minutes. This is the hottest phase of a fire and is the most dangerous for anybody trapped within. During this test there was approximately a 2 ½ minute window of opportunity from when the smoke detector activated to when an individual could potentially safely exit the fire building. Again, this test utilized direct flame and the test was performed in the room of origin. In an actual residential house fire, once a fire leaves the room of origin, it starts spreading throughout the house making it more difficult to exit from adjacent areas. There are no guarantees during a fire but a properly installed and maintained smoke alarm provides early detection and warning that may allow an individual to safely exit a residential building fire.

Carbon monoxide detectors are as important to home safety as are smoke detectors. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a clear, colorless, odorless, and insidious poison that is responsible for hundreds of inadvertent and preventable deaths in the United States each year. Carbon Monoxide is a silent killer that is virtually undetectable without using detection technology. Carbon Monoxide detectors sound an alarm when exposure to carbon monoxide reaches potentially hazardous levels. Properly working carbon monoxide detectors provide for early warning before the deadly gas builds up to a dangerous level.

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and alarms are currently required in all new residential buildings. Fire acts the same in new residential as well as older residential buildings. Carbon monoxide acts the same in new residential as well as older residential buildings. As the Director of Public Safety, Health and Welfare for the City of Stamford, and a fire service professional with over 23 years of experience I appeal to you in the name of public safety and security to mandate that all residential buildings be required to have properly working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and alarms. I respectfully urge your support for HB 5394, an Act Concerning Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors and Alarms in Residential Buildings.

Respectfully,

Thaddeus K. Jankowski

Thaddeus K. Jankowski
Director of Public Safety, Health and Welfare