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Mr. Chairman,

I am writing to support the passage of the bill that would reinstate a key component of legislature related to persons with drunken driving offenses. I am speaking specifically about Sections 3 and 4 of HB 5553. When the former multiple drunk driving program was repealed, 14-227f of the General Statutes, the end result was that 20,000 multiple DUI offenders would wind up 'pardoned' for their crime. There was no longer a program that would teach these people the impact of their decisions, and how to make better decisions in the future. These potential killers were allowed to pay a minimal fee of \$175, and get their license back. If this was their first offense, they were also not required to install the Ignition Interlock Device. That was saved for their next offense, which had the high likelihood of resulting in serious injury or death to innocent citizens. This is unconscionable and it is appalling that a state which prides itself in public safety would allow such persons back behind the wheel of a vehicle.

However, there were programs that were highly effective in turning the lives of many alcohol abusers, with multiple drunken driving offenses, into sober and law abiding citizens. These programs are run at no cost to the state! How expensive is it to pay for the aftermath of a fatal accident caused by a drunk driver? How much does the state pay to clean up after a multi-car collision caused by a person driving while intoxicated? The state pays NOTHING for a program that works to educate offenders about their disease and its impact on society. These programs provide follow-up care, again at no cost to the state, to ensure that these individuals continue receiving the support they need to stop this behavior.

In conclusion, I strongly urge this bill to pass. Section 3 would restore the Multiple Offender Drunken Driving Program and apply to those convicted after Jan. 1, 2012, and Section 4 would hold all of those subject to the program prior to Dec. 31, 2011, to complete their obligation to the State as it was originally mandated. There are no words that will ease the pain of someone who has lost a loved one to a drunk driver. There are no words that will ease the pain of someone who has been forever disabled by a drunk driver. There are words that will help someone who has made the wrong decision to drink and drive. Those words can be found in programs that provide education and follow-up care, that have a proven record of success. Those words need to be heard today, in the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,



Gregory P. Nolin, CADAC