

Karen K. Hardy
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Re: Raised Bill No. 5553 "An Act Concerning Substance Abuse Programs"

Mr. Chairman,

My written 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of the multiple offender drunken driving program, also known as 14-227f of the general statutes, which was repealed as of 12/31/2011.

I have been a certified addictions counselor in the State of Connecticut since August 2007 and worked as a substance abuse counselor with the Department of Correction, The Commonwealth Group and New Directions, Inc. I have seen the changes that programs such as these agencies provide to substance abusers in the State of Connecticut make in the lives of those who attend said programs. As a result, those who attain sobriety and treatment through these programs are then able to become law abiding citizens who have a positive impact on society. They can contribute successfully in jobs and with all those they come into contact with. As a result of the repeal of this law it is my understanding that there are approximately 20,000 multiple drunk driving offenders who were not mandated to participate in programs as what the Commonwealth Group provides. Therefore these offenders may very well continue in the high risk behavior of drinking and driving and continue to threaten the safety and welfare of themselves and all those on the roads. Merely paying a \$175 fee to restore a driver's license is grossly insufficient in providing the information and addressing the issues that surround DUI. Because these multiple offender DUI programs are not State funded, but all fees covered by the offenders, it only makes sense to reinstate this program and reverse the decision made in this area. The multiple offender DUI program has proven to be effective in addressing this legal matter. I have sat with these offenders, talked and listened to them, and believe in my heart that this is the way to address this issue, through programs such as this. It is imperative that multiple DUI offenders receive the information they deserve and desperately need to make the changes that can save so many lives.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.



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