



City of Bridgeport
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

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JOSEPH L. GAUDETTE, JR.
Acting Chief of Police

TESTIMONY OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
TO THE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Monday, April 1, 2013

RE: H.B. 6388 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF A MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE REGULATING THE OPERATION OR USE OF A DIRT BIKE, ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE OR SNOWMOBILE.

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 6388.

Bridgeport faces the same challenges as other urban centers when it comes to dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles operating illegally and recklessly on our streets, parks and neighborhoods. These operators simply have zero regard for public safety. They put their own lives in jeopardy. The risk the lives of motorists and innocent pedestrians as they weave in and out of traffic at high rates of speed. They rip up our recreational ball fields that are there for the enjoyment of our citizens, young and old. Sometimes traveling in packs of a dozen or more, their loud engines destroy the quality of life for all residents.

The police department shares the frustration of our citizens, who should be free to sit on their front porches in peace or walk down the sidewalk without having to jump to safety. This is not just a bane in Bridgeport but in every city in Connecticut.

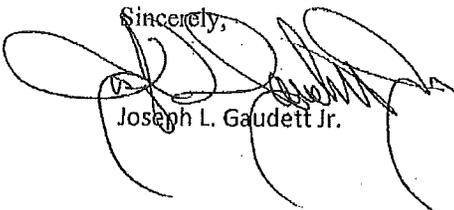
I would support any initiative that would assist us in curbing this dangerous behavior, and stiffer penalties I hope would deter at least some of this activity. Law enforcement is in a Catch 22 situation. In Bridgeport, we have a no-chase policy when it comes to dirt bikes and quads. The operators know that and will even slow down in an effort to bait our officers into a pursuit.

We try to be creative in our enforcement. Our officers look for them when they gas up or are parked outside a corner store. We work with the community to determine where they are garaged and intervene there. Yet the behavior continues.

Anything our state legislature can do to add additional consequences for these menaces would be a valuable addition tool for us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Joseph L. Gaudette Jr.