



Testimony of

City of New Britain Public Safety Telecommunications Director

James P. Donnelly

RE: Raised Senate Bill 1143

March 22, 2013

Senator Coleman, Senator Doyle, Representative Fox and Representative Ritter and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to remark on pending legislation regarding the prohibition of racial profiling involving traffic stops in Connecticut. The Racial Profiling Prohibition Advisory Board has provided the legislature with an outstanding report on the issues associated with enforcement of the state's policy prohibiting such profiling by police officers. The policy has long been well intentioned and broadly understood by the Connecticut law enforcement community. Indeed, racial profiling by police is a rare exception but one that requires continuing vigilance to deter unprofessional conduct. Having been involved the public safety community for over four decades I can attest that Connecticut chiefs of police support the prohibition policy and have only differed on the means and method of data collection required.

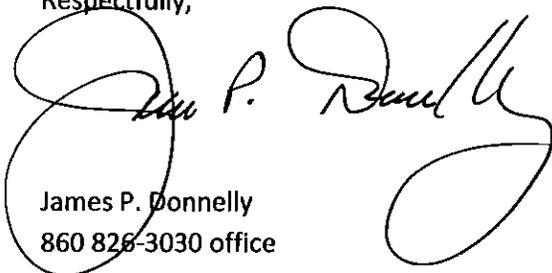
The legislation proposed prescribes new procedures that are best accomplished via mobile data systems that already exist in the overwhelming majority of marked police vehicles in Connecticut. However, in order for the process to be efficient and consistent, mobile printers are required for every marked police vehicle. These printers, first initiated in pilot electronic citation programs developed in conjunction with the Judicial Branch by the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Connecticut State Police Division, have been an overwhelming success. The Department of Transportation Office of Highway Safety won a national "Best Practice" award for the collaboration among the parties to the project. These e-citation printers coupled with a statewide browser-based data collection application could facilitate the uniform implementation of the proposed legislation. While the cost for the introduction of the printers is not insignificant, the return on investment will be rapid, broadly based, and will contribute to additional law enforcement and criminal justice efficiencies. Where the electronic ticket systems have been implemented, the traffic enforcement activity of the assigned officers and troopers has been intensified. This leads to less crashes, reasonable revenue increases, and a safer highway system. A simple productivity increase of 15% in issued citations would pay the full cost of the mobile printers within one year. Moreover, it would provide a consistently printed document to motorists involved in traffic stops whether they were issued a citation or not. In addition, it would pave the way for electronic warning tickets and broader use of the summons procedure for selective misdemeanor arrests.

Without electronic means of printing notices to motorists involved in a traffic stop, police officers will be required to complete paper forms and to retain copies of these documents in manual file systems. This adds an additional burden to frequently understaffed police agencies. Moreover, it does nothing to improve data collection accuracy. Using the automated systems available in most mobile communications systems, the exact geographic coordinates can be easily obtained and automatically recorded by simple application software. In addition, required data fields like date and time of stop, officer ID, and whether a citation was issued can all be accomplished seamlessly via a modest computer interface to the existing electronic citation applications operating in local communities and the state police.

While the price to outfit every marked police car in Connecticut with electronic citation software, traffic stop software, and a mobile printer could cost as much as \$3.5 million dollars in new bonding; this is an investment that would likely last at least five years and over that period generate \$17.5 million dollars in additional citation revenue at the conservative rate of a 15% increase in citations issued. It would be difficult to find another investment that would yield such a significant benefit and pay for itself so rapidly.

I urge your strong consideration of the fiscal support to install the technology to enable not only the spirit of the Senator Penn's vision of fair and effective traffic law enforcement but also its efficiency.

Respectfully,



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James P. Donnelly is Director of Public Safety Telecommunications for the City of New Britain. As part of his duties he has led the public safety information system technology efforts of the Capitol Region Council of Governments for the past fifteen years. Most recently, he directed the e-Citation project for CRCOG which has been piloted in fifteen communities. He is a former City of Hartford police captain.