

Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
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Before the Committee on Transportation
Hartford, CT
February 20, 2013

Testifying in Support of PSB 300 An Act Authorizing The Use of High Occupancy
Vehicle Lanes By All Vehicles During Rush Hour

Good Afternoon Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA supports PSB 300 which would allow any vehicle to use the HOV Lanes during times of heavy traffic. Currently, HOV lane use is only authorized for vehicles in which there are two or more occupants. However, anyone who has been stuck in traffic alongside an HOV lane knows that it is the only empty lane during rush hour, and the few vehicles that are using it have only a single occupant. In essence, the current restrictions reward individuals willing to break the law while punishing safe drivers.

A 2011 Urban Mobility report by the Texas Transportation Institute noted that Connecticut lost 48 million hours in delays to traffic congestion, as well as \$971 million dollars in lost time and fuel in our three largest urban areas (Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport-Stamford).

Connecticut should use every tool available to combat traffic congestion in order to maintain the flow of commerce – especially when those tools, such as the existing HOV lanes, wouldn't cost the state any money.

We urge the committee to support PSB-300.