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TESTIMONY ON SB 796

Good Morning Senator Maynard, Rep. Guerrero, Sen. Boucher, Rep. Scribner and members of the Committee. I am Senator Jason Welch, representing the 31st Senate District, and I welcome the opportunity this morning to testify in support of SB 796, An Act Concerning The Availability of Motor Vehicle Records Through The Criminal Justice Information System.

The issue came to light after a constituent, Demetrious Lausell-Vann of Bristol, was hit and killed by a drunk driver this past June. Demetrious was a hard working family man, a father of three young children, who was riding his motorcycle home from work when he was struck by an unregistered minivan driven by a repeat drunk driver, habitual motor vehicle offender, and convicted felon. As Demetrious' mother, Lorisa Jones later found out while trying to make sense of the loss of her son, the driver should not have been driving due to multiple suspensions and the police missed opportunities to get him off the road, and to impound the unregistered and uninsured vehicle he was driving. But on the occasions when the driver was pulled over, the police always let him go, never seized the illegal van, and took no actions to keep a serial offender off our streets.

At the request of Ms. Jones, I have proposed this bill to get real time driving records and vehicle insurance status into the criminal justice database that all police and law enforcement officials can access. As a result of Lorisa's exhaustive investigation into the events that caused the death of her son, she discovered that the killer kept getting light sentences for crimes, kept walking out of courts, kept driving away from police stops

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without a valid license or registration. If the prosecutors, the police, the courts had access to all the information of past offenses as well as pending charges, perhaps the killer would have received a longer sentence, or been taken off the streets. Lorisa's efforts won't bring back her son, but they can make a difference and perhaps save someone else's son in the future. I know we are in the process of getting the criminal justice information system on-line and operating. I want to make sure that this system will utilize the most current information regarding all crimes and violations, including recent ones that have not been disposed of yet. Maybe we can prevent some tragedy like the death of Demetrious in the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today, and I will be glad to answer any questions you might have.



Jason C. Welch

State Senator – 31st District