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**Testimony from Fran Mayko, Public Affairs Manager
AAA Southern New England
Committee on Transportation**

**HB 5247 An Act Requiring Eye Examinations for Persons over the age of 65, seeking
renewal of a Driver's License**

Mr. Chairmen and members of the Transportation Committee. . .

My name is Fran Mayko. I am public affairs manager in Connecticut for AAA Southern New England, whose territory covers Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Fairfield, New Haven, and Litchfield Counties in CT. We represent more than 3.5 million members in all 3 states, a half million which are in Connecticut.

I thank you for this opportunity to speak in opposition of HB 5247, An Act Requiring Eye Examinations for Persons over the Age of 65, Seeking Renewal of a Driver's License.

AAA opposes the use of chronological age alone as the sole criterion to appraise driver competence.

We feel this type of legislation discriminates against a particular group solely based on age, which is not necessarily a good standard to use to determine driver competence.

I'm presuming the intent of this proposed bill is an attempt to remove incompetent drivers from Connecticut's roadways because statistics do show that older drivers tend to be a greater driving risk on the road.

That may be true; however any driver who has vision problems – no matter the age -- would be a danger to themselves and others on our roadways.

(Please turn over)

Instead, our recommendation would be to require vision testing for all drivers upon license renewal.

AAA realizes that Connecticut's fiscal crisis prompted lawmakers in 2011 to drop a never-funded law that required vision screenings for all drivers.

But that action has made CT one of 8 states that now lacks a vision requirement for license renewals.

In AAA Southern New England's branches in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, we offer vision screening as part of a package of registry services to members.

This is an avenue you may want to explore in CT. Given the proper training and equipment from the state, AAA Southern New England would consider offering in our 7 Connecticut offices periodic vision testing for all drivers as part of its current DMV-related duties.

I urge you to reject HB 5247 as it now stands and explore creative ways to ensure the safety of Connecticut's general driving public.

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