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**CITY OF NEW HAVEN
BOARD OF ALDERMEN**

February 19, 2013

Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

We are pleased to submit the following in support of SB 190 An Act concerning municipal penalties for retrieval of a dirt bike and establishing a title system for dirt bike ownership. We believe this legislation allows cities to better enforce laws regarding the illegal operation of dirt bikes and all-terrain-vehicles which has increased dramatically over the past several years and has a negative impact on all New Haven neighborhoods in safety and quality of life. As recently as November New Haven residents from all sections of the city spoke at a November 11, 2012 hearing to express fear for their children, the elderly or themselves, while walking on the sidewalk or attempting to enjoy a park; and their concerns about noise and fumes from illegal and illegally operated vehicles plague many residential neighborhoods.

We have been working on this issue for at least the last eight years. On May 2, 2005, responding to the concern of New Haven residents for a safe and appealing quality of life in their city, the New Haven Board of Aldermen enacted an ordinance prohibiting dirt bikes, all terrain vehicles and similar vehicles from all public ways. The ordinance authorizes police to temporarily take such vehicles into custody if they are operated illegally. Despite the ordinance and due to current limitations in Connecticut State statues granting municipalities the authority and ability to better enforce laws against the illegal operation of dirt bikes and all terrain vehicles, such vehicles are increasingly operated illegally in New Haven and have been involved in numerous, sometimes deadly, incidents, including:

- On July 24, 2006 in the Newhallville neighborhood a 15-year-old boy died after driving into the back of a van while racing a stolen dirt bike.
- On January 29, 2010, in the Fairhaven neighborhood, a stolen all terrain vehicle associated with drug activity resulted in a double homicide.
- Earlier in 2012; a young girl was hit by a dirt bike rider while waiting at a bus stop with her dad, and a dirt biker himself suffered life-threatening injuries after losing control of an unregistered illegally operated dirt bike and hitting a tree.

Dirt bikes riders in parks, in the street and on sidewalks are often unlicensed, ineligible for a motor vehicle on the basis of age, are unaware or disregarding of motor vehicle laws. Some dirt bikers expressed on the record at the November 11, 2012 public hearing that they often operate recklessly for the thrill of it and do not intend to abide by laws unless actually arrested.