

City of New Haven

Toni N. Harp – Mayor



Testimony Regarding

SB 83 AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL NOTICE OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR PERMIT RENEWALS

Submitted by

Lt. Tony Reyes, New Haven Police Department

February 18, 2014

Senator Doyle, Rep. Baram, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of SB 83 An Act Concerning Municipal Notice of Alcoholic Liquor Permit Renewals. In 2011 the General Assembly created a Pilot in the City of New Haven which allows the Chief of Police the opportunity to comment on liquor permit application renewals, this bill would continue this program and expand it to the remainder of the state.

In 2011 the City came to the General Assembly for help in dealing with problem bars as chronic issues existed at some liquor establishments in New Haven ranging from persistent drug dealing, to violence, to even homicide. The police department had spent considerable resources investigating activity at some of these establishments, yet when the establishment applied for a liquor permit renewals, the police department was often in the dark. With over one hundred establishments in the City with liquor permits, this bill allows the department to be notified when a liquor permit is up for renewal and to submit comment for consideration. The municipal police departments are the ones responding to and investigating problems at these establishments, and have the most knowledge of activities occurring at such establishments.

The City uses this tool sparingly. We have found since passage there has been considerable improvement in the civility present at our liquor establishments, however, there remain a few establishments that are magnets for trouble, that have operators that do not take the proper care to ensure public safety and create environments where lawless not only exists but thrives.

As a detective I lead the investigations into acts of violence that occurred at a number of these establishments – most notably the Lazy Lizzard and Key Club Caberet. We have filed comment on both establishments. Liquor control has been working with the City to review these permits. Due to the ability of an establishment to renew as late as a day before expiration, and the required administrative renewal that must be issued at that time, we feel that there is an opportunity to further strengthen this bill – and look forward to working with the committee and the Department of Consumer Protection: Liquor Control to ensure that ample time is given for comment prior to a renewal. It is in the interest of public safety and of responsible owners to ensure that only those who have demonstrated that they are suitable to operate a liquor establishment are given that privilege.

Thank you for your consideration of this very valuable legislation.