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Testimony of Garvin G. Ambrose, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Monday, March 17, 2014

Good day Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is Garvin Ambrose and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning:

Raised House Bill No. 5344, *An Act Concerning Child Endangerment While Operating a Motor Vehicle While Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor or Drugs.*

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) **supports** Raised House Bill No. 5344 as it will allow law enforcement authorities to charge a person, who is driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs with a minor in the vehicle, with the additional charge of risk of injury to a minor.

According to the Connecticut State Police, Crime in Connecticut statistics, there were 9,230 criminal arrests for driving under the influence (DUI) in 2012, a slight increase over 2011. While CT has adopted some tough laws intended to reduce and even prevent drunk driving, CT is one of only four states that has NOT included a child endangerment provision to the driving under the influence offense. Drunk driving is a selfish act that endangers anyone unfortunate enough to cross the path of the drunk driver. In our opinion, drunk driving with a child in the car is tantamount to child abuse. Even if only 10% of the DUI arrests involved a child in the car; that is 923 potential cases of child endangerment gone unaddressed.

"Education is important, but we're to the point where almost everyone knows they shouldn't drink and drive. The people who are still doing it are choosing to do it. The most effective way to deal with them is to arrest them." (David Kelly, 2002)

The OVA strongly urges **support** of Raised House Bill No. 5344. Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

With gratitude,

Garvin G. Ambrose, Esq.
State Victim Advocate