

Testimony by Alice Carter

SB 465
"An Act Concerning Ignition Interlock Devices"

Members of Judicial Committee
March 17, 2014

Good Afternoon, my name is Alice Carter. Thank you Co-Chair Colman, Co-Chair Fox and the members of the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 465, An Act Concerning Ignition Interlock Devices. I am asking for your support in proposed changes.

On August 19, 1995, my son Daniel was killed by a drunk driver while we were vacationing in Florida. He was 13 years old. We were staying at a relative's home across the street from the beach. We had planned to go to Disney later in the week to celebrate my birthday. What had started out as a beautiful day, ended in tragedy. My family and I were crossing the road to get to the beach. Danny was very excited to see the turtles come onto the beach to lay their eggs, and everyone was very careful crossing a busy road. All of a sudden I heard a terrible noise and quickly discovered that noise was the sound of my son's body hitting the hood a car. As I ran to him, I kept calling his name, with no response. When I reached him, I tried to breathe life back into his lifeless body. An ambulance finally came and rushed him to the hospital where we found out that he had died on impact. I will never forget that moment. My last image of him, was laying on a gurney with a white sheet over his broken body. I cannot express the horror of that night. Never in a million years could I have imagined it. The next few days are still a blur: going to a funeral home in Florida to make arrangements for his body to be sent home, flying home with an empty seat next to me and seeing friends and family in stunned disbelief when we returned home. In an instant our lives had been changed. My daughter who was 10 years old at the time and witnessed this horrific tragedy had nightmares for years. Life as we knew it ended that night. Instead of celebrating my birthday at

Disney, I was at my sons wake. I cannot describe how awful it was to see his friends coming to say goodbye to him. They were just children who had to experience the death of a friend. When you lose a child you lose all of the life events that come with the years. Graduations from high school and college, wedding, babies; all of those events we take for granted. Many of his friends are now married and have children of their own. We had to create a new normal.

As we began to receive information about the driver of the car, we found out that she was a 60 year old woman, who was noticeably intoxicated at the scene. It turns out that she had a BAC of .13. I have no doubt in my mind that this was not the first time she drove under the influence and that it probably would not be the last. Statistics show that a person will drive approximately 86 times under the influence before the first arrest. I also know, through speaking at MADD Victim Impact panels that many of those continue to drive under the influence. In the year that followed his death I had many conversations with an advocate from the Homicide Victims Department preparing for the sentencing of the woman that killed my son. I was stunned that I was dealing with a Homicide Victims advocate, but in reality, that is what it is -- homicide.

Fortunately I was able to contact a wonderful woman from the MADD Fairfield County Chapter who helped me with this undertaking. I had no previous dealings with the judicial system and am grateful to have found MADD. I have been involved ever since. I feel it is my responsibility to make people aware of this preventable strategy. People make a choice to drink and drive, Although public speaking is not my forte and it makes me very uncomfortable. I do it because we need to get the word out. MADD staff members and wonderful volunteers work tirelessly to spread their message. But we can't do it alone. We need your support.

I am asking you support proposed Senate Bill 465 to help ensure that no other family has to feel the pain of losing a loved, as a result of someone choosing to drink and drive.