



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

**REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT SAMPSON**  
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**RANKING MEMBER**  
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**March 24, 2014**

**Judiciary Committee**

**HB 5585: An Act Concerning Surveillance of Cell Phone Communication by Law Enforcement Officials**

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, Senator Doyle, Representative Ritter, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas and the Esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I write today in strong support of HB 5585: An Act Concerning Surveillance of Cell Phone Communication by Law Enforcement Officials. This bill is necessary to clarify the restrictions on law enforcement regarding monitoring the private cell phone communications of our citizens. The bill adds the following to the current General Statutes: "[for purposes of this section and sections 53a-188 and 53a-189,] wiretapping of a cellular radio telephone by a criminal law enforcement official is in the lawful performance of the official's duty when such official (1) has probable cause to believe that the cellular radio telephone has been used in furtherance of the commission of a crime and has obtained a search warrant that authorizes wiretapping of the cellular radio telephone, or (2) is otherwise authorized by state or federal law to engage in wiretapping of the cellular radio telephone."

This is a necessary addition to current law because it narrows the scope of when it is acceptable for a law enforcement official to listen in on the wireless communications of private citizens. It is the responsibility of not only our Federal government but also our State to respect the confidentiality of private communications, and to ensure that government and such officials are held accountable.

When our forefathers adopted the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, this limitation on government in favor of privacy was exactly what they had in mind. The proposed provision requires that multiple steps are taken to ensure that the Constitutional rights of citizens are not infringed upon. Through this addition, officials are not relying on their own discretion in instances of wiretapping, and instead must seek higher authority and provide compelling evidence of a viable threat of criminal activity. This not only protects the innocent, but places accountability to demonstrate such a threat as well as accountability on the granting higher authority. Opponents of this bill may claim that this provision is unnecessary. However, I believe it is incumbent upon us to take every possible step to restrain government from excessive intrusion into our private lives while balancing the need for public safety.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Sampson", written over a circular stamp or mark.

Rob Sampson  
State Representative  
80<sup>th</sup> District