



State of Connecticut
SENATOR DONALD E. WILLIAMS, JR.
Twenty-ninth District
President Pro Tempore

Testimony before the Transportation Committee
Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr.

February 28, 2014

In Support of Senate Bill 236 *AAC Transparency In Motor Vehicle Dealer Fees*
In Support of House Bill 5289 *AA Establishing The Connecticut Port Authority*

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, distinguished members of the Transportation Committee; I am submitting this testimony to you in support of SB 236 and HB 5289.

SB 236 AAC Transparency In Motor Vehicle Dealer Fees:

Thank you for raising this concept. This bill is part of a larger focus on consumer issues that Senate Democrats have put forward for consideration this session. This bill is intended to give consumers shopping for cars (both new and used) full knowledge of the price from which they are negotiating up front. Specifically, the bill is intended to address a situation that many of us have experienced – you’ve concluded negotiations with the car dealer, settled on a price that you can afford, only to learn when presented with the invoice that the price you negotiated isn’t really the price because the dealer has tacked on additional charges and fees, sometimes totaling several hundred dollars, that you were unaware of, for services that you never asked for. The bill attempts to protect consumers from these unfair and deceptive practices in the following ways:

- Existing law prohibits any dealer prep fee that is not requested. The proposal makes clear that any such request must be made prior to the preparation of the invoice.
- Regarding conveyance/processing fees: Existing law requires either (1) that the dealer provide a written statement explaining the fees or (2) that DMV determine a type of sign that the dealer must display in the area where negotiations take place. This proposal will mandate that both requirements are met.
- Regarding the advertising of prices for cars: Existing law says that advertisements for new cars must include in the price federal tax, cost of delivery, dealer prep fees and any other charges, except that local tax, registration fees, or dealer conveyance/processing fees are excluded from the advertised price. This proposal (1) applies this advertising restriction to used cars as well and (2) makes a violation an unfair trade practice.

HB 5289 AA *Establishing The Connecticut Port Authority*

I am pleased to see that the Transportation Committee is again taking up the issue of deep water ports and the creation of a statewide port authority. In 2011, the General Assembly recognized the importance of Bradley International Airport and our five general aviation airports as economic development engines for Connecticut, and created the Connecticut Airport Authority. Similarly, Senate Democrats have long held that our three deep water ports are untapped and underutilized economic development engines, and in fact, this committee raised and the Senate passed a bill creating a statewide port authority last session (SB 1043, An Act Establishing the Connecticut State-Wide Port Authority). A Port Authority would be responsible for developing and promoting these underutilized assets in a coordinated and cohesive manner. With coordinated leadership, Connecticut will be poised to play a prominent role in the short sea shipping industry, with the benefits of job creation and growth in local economies. I am confident that this committee will move this issue forward, and I look forward to supporting its passage in the Senate.