

Good afternoon:

Mr. Chairman, members of the General Law Committee. I want to thank you for having this public hearing today and giving me the opportunity to speak in favor of Senate Bill 301.

I was sworn in as the new mayor of West Haven on December 1st 2013. Prior to that I owned and operated a jewelry company in the center of our downtown for 20+ years.

During that time West Haven struggled with unruly bars on a weekly basis. There were large crowds of inebriated people walking in our downtown area. Many times fights would occur.

On Monday mornings when I would arrive to work I would find everything from broken bottles to drug paraphernalia in the municipal parking behind my business.

As a merchant, it has always frustrated me that the city had no power to suspend or revoke liquor permits when this type of activity presents itself.

Just before Christmas, merely 3 weeks from me taking office, my worse fear took place at one of our local bars.

Allegedly, an argument started in the bathroom of a bar and ended up outside in the front of the business, resulting in a shooting. The victim later died of the gunshot wound.

As I gathered information, I was told that there had been over 100 incidents at this establishment involving large unruly crowds, fighting, stabbings and now a murder. The victim of the stabbing is now paralyzed.

This behavior can't be allowed to continue at any time and especially now when I am trying to revitalize our downtown district, (as well as all other parts of our city).

I believe that the local chief of police is the person that knows their city the best and knows the problems that do exist within their perspective city in regards to disorderly establishments.

I feel that along with the state liquor commission, the local municipal law enforcement official should have a say in the suspension and revocation of liquor permits. I ask on behalf of cities and towns like West Haven that you consider and approve SB301.

Thank you, for your time and undivided attention on a serious situation.