



February 17, 2015

Written Statement of

MICHAEL P. RYAN

President, Connecticut Broadcasters Association

Before the

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Concerning

RAISED BILL NO. 6750: AN ACT EXPANDING THE REQUIREMENT FOR DISCLOSURE OF ARREST RECORDS DURING A PENDING PROSECUTION UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

Co-Chair Casano, Co-Chair Jutila, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit the Connecticut Broadcasters Association's comments on Raised Bill No. 6750, concerning a restorative amendment to Connecticut's Freedom of Information Act. The Connecticut Broadcasters Association (CBA) membership comprises all of the FCC-licensed broadcast radio and television stations in Connecticut.

The CBA strongly advocates and reaffirms its support for open government and freedom of information in the State of Connecticut. The CBA believes that it is a core principle of American democracy that the people have the right to monitor the activities of their government in order to assure that all public officials and workers are carrying out their duties honestly and conscientiously and are not abusing the public trust. In order to do so, the public must be able to see, report on, and discuss public records, which in any case are prepared or gathered by government at the public's expense and on its ultimate authority.

In recent years, the cherished Connecticut tradition of freedom of information has been pummeled, as the Legislature has enacted numerous laws limiting the public's access to information previously available. This year the Legislature has an opportunity to clarify the availability of certain public records which journalists and researchers have long had access to: arrest records. There is a distinct need for the public at large, through the work of journalists, researchers, and others to learn the names and other details, including charges, of persons arrested within the State. Only in this way can the public begin to understand the workings of its police force, check possible transgressions, alert itself to trends and dangers, and oversee the administration of justice.

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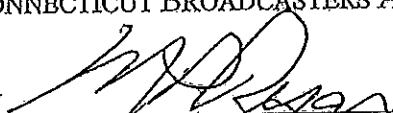
Raised Bill No. 6750 simply restores the law to what had been generally accepted to be the intended interpretation. Arrest records are public records and must be generally available to the public "from the time of such arrest." The CBA therefore strongly supports the enactment of R.B. No. 6750.

We hope the Legislature will agree and pass this bill.

Thank you for your consideration and, we hope, positive response to our comments, respectfully submitted today.

CONNECTICUT BROADCASTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

BY



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PRESIDENT

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