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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 6866: An act limiting private passenger nonfleet automobile insurance underwriting factors and increasing the motor vehicle minimum amount of proof of financial responsibility for property damage.

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Submitted To: The Connecticut General Assembly

Good Afternoon Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, other elected officials, and guests. My name is Cynthia Jennings, and I am an elected official in the City of Hartford. I currently serve as a member of the Hartford Court of Common Council for the City of Hartford. I am also a Civil Rights attorney, barred in state and federal courts in the State of Connecticut, and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York.

I am here today in support of **House Bill 6866, an act limiting private passenger nonfleet automobile insurance underwriting factors and increasing the motor vehicle minimum amount of proof of financial responsibility for property damage.**

Currently, Connecticut has the second most costly automobile insurance rates in New England, and Connecticut residents experience the 9th highest automobile insurance rates **in the nation**. Insurance premiums are inflated based on the policy holder's personal information, including largely irrelevant factors such as credit record, age, sex, marital status, income and education.

House Bill 6866 limits the factors used to calculate insurance premiums to *driving history, length of driving experience* and *average annual amount of miles driven*. These factors have direct relevance on an individual's ability to be a consistently safe and responsible driver.

The 2013 American Community Survey of the United States Census reported a total population in the City of Hartford of 125,130. An estimated 33.6% of Hartford residents live below the poverty rate, with a median household income of \$29,430 a year. Approximately 13,527 households in Hartford are headed by females. This constitutes 30% of all households in the City of Hartford. The population of three years old and over, enrolled in school, is 41,570. Most of these children live in female headed households, and *more than half* of these children live in poverty. The number of individuals living in Hartford that hold a bachelor's degree or higher is 5.7%.

All of the above statistics come from the most recent census numbers, and they *all* indicate that continuing to base automobile insurance rates on factors such as *credit record, age, sex, marital status, income or education* would result in an *unjust disparity* in the pricing of automobile insurance. Clearly, households living in poverty, *must* have transportation to take their children to day care, school and to get to work on a daily basis. Many of the poor would be forced to drive without automobile insurance because they would have to choose between food, clothing, rent or utilities and car insurance. Poor people, who are driving on Connecticut roads, place all of our citizens at risk. Higher insurance premiums in Connecticut now contribute to the nearly 10% of drivers currently uninsured in our state. A large percentage of these drivers, are driving out of necessity, as Connecticut does not have a viable mass transportation system that

can support the needs of single parents who may have to take their children to day care, school, food shopping or work. People who are currently driving without insurance, often do so out of economic need or economic necessity.

Affordable insurance rates are an important element in the development of our local workforce, and our local and state economy. Lower insurance rates make it possible for our poorer citizens to be able to obtain car insurance. We as elected officials, must do whatever we can to make automobile insurance affordable and accessible to **every** Connecticut resident.

House Bill 6866 limits the factors used to calculate insurance premiums to three relevant factors: 1) Driving History, 2) length of driving experience, and 3) average annual amount of miles driven. Limiting the factors used to calculate insurance premiums reduces insurance premium rates. It is **good for Connecticut** and it is **good** for Connecticut residents. Protecting Connecticut's residents from artificially inflated insurance premiums, will increase the number of insured motorists on the road, and it will contribute to a more economically viable, stable and humane state. As elected officials, we care about all of our constituents. It is our job to protect the economic assets of our citizens, and to advocate on behalf of those who may not be in a position to advocate for themselves.

I fully support House Bill 6866, and I urge the Connecticut Legislature to support it as well. Thank you for the opportunity to present before this body.