



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE MITCH BOLINSKY
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING ROOM 4200
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

CAPITOL PHONE: (860) 240-8700
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-1423
Mitch.Bolinsky@housegop.ct.gov

RANKING MEMBER
AGING COMMITTEE

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*Testimony by Representative Mitch Bolinsky
Before the Transportation Committee
Supporting House Bills 6588, 6322, 6501, 6348, 5943, 6360
February 9, 2015*

My thanks to the Honorable Co-Chairs, Senator Maynard and Representative Guerrero; Ranking Members Senator Boucher and Representative O'Dea; as well as the entire Transportation Committee for your consideration today of the above mentioned bills.

- **HB6588, AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN CONTAINERS IN MOTOR VEHICLES.** This bill is a significant piece of legislation to further reduce the number of alcohol-related crashes, fatalities and damages resulting from drivers operating under the influence of alcohol in the state of Connecticut. This measure has the support of Mothers Against Drunk Driving /Connecticut and you will hear testimony later from Janice Margolis, Executive Director of MADD CT and Skip Church, a leading volunteer advocate for MADD CT who also lost a son to a drunk driver.
 - Connecticut is one of just 11 states without an open container law. 40 other states have already enacted federally-compliant laws to deal with this drinking and driving behavior. By doing the same, Connecticut can continue its recent strong actions to save lives.
 - In May 2014, dozens of legislators stood with Governor Malloy at the signing of tough legislation to deter repeat offending drunk drivers with a law requiring ignition interlock devices. This open container restriction is a logical next step. Drafting will be a snap because federal guidelines and 40 other states' in-force statutes already exist.
 - Briefly, the proposed legislation, to be compliant with the federal program, shall prohibit both possession of any open alcoholic beverage container and consumption of any alcoholic beverage, applying to all vehicle occupants, yet carve out an exception for open containers of alcoholic beverages possessed by passengers "in the passenger area of a motor vehicle designed, maintained, or used primarily for the transportation of persons for compensation" (e.g., buses, taxicabs, and limos).
 - For more detail, please refer to OLR Report 2008-R-0128 on the subject or see me.
- **HB6322, AN ACT STUDYING MEASURES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AND TERROR ON SCHOOL BUSES.** This measure came to me through several constituents and is intended to initiate a study of reasonable measures that would prevent a potential tragedy or act of terror involving school children traveling on school buses.
 - I believe that transportation of school children must be considered part of the overall school safety initiative. As we enhance security in school facilities around Connecticut, our children ride to school each day on unsecured buses that are most often parked in unfenced, poorly lit remote lots with open gates and without security or electronic surveillance. In the past, unsecured buses have sometimes been

subject to vandalism and are soft targets for individuals or groups that may not be bold enough to approach a school facility but want to harm children. Electronic surveillance and secured, lockable, fenced terminal facilities should be the standard.

- HB6501, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEMS BY SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD DRIVERS. This bill will prevent “lost, youthful drivers” who are, for lack of experience, less proficient at navigating and who could be presented with risky driving experiences that may expose them to dangerous situations when lost. Handheld electronics are a distraction to youthful and experienced drivers alike. This bill should be drafted as specific to GPS, and permit only “turn-by-turn” voice direction use. Handheld uses like programming, initiation of searches, data entry, and navigation by visual means shall still be prohibited.
- HB6348, AN ACT CONCERNING PARENT ATTENDANCE AT SAFE DRIVING INSTRUCTION COURSES. This bill would modify existing Connecticut DMV graduated licensing restrictions for new 16 or 17 year-old drivers, waiving the Two-Hour Parent Training requirement for parents that have taken and can document completion of this requirement with another child within the prior three years.
- HB5943, AN ACT EXEMPTING CERTAIN FUEL-EFFICIENT VEHICLES FROM THE MINIMUM VEHICLE OCCUPANCY REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE'S HOV LANES. The title is self-explanatory. In this environment we find ourselves in where we are trying to relieve congestion on our highways this bill will begin to address this problem and offer incentives to use these lanes that some say are underutilized.
- HB6360, AN ACT EXEMPTING VETERANS FROM THE SURCHARGE FOR VETERAN'S LICENSE PLATES. This is a simple bill to exempt honorably-discharged veterans applying for and maintaining State of Connecticut veterans' license plates from Connecticut DMV's state vanity-license plate upcharge. This new Veteran's benefit will not be retroactive, only applying to new plates issued, effective after enactment. It just seems like the right thing to do.

Thank you for your time and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully,

Representative Mitch Bolinsky
106th District, House of Representatives