

**Testimony of William S. Church in support of House Bill 6588  
AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN CONTAINERS IN MOTOR VEHICLES**

My name is William Church and this written testimony is in support of House Bill 6588, AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN CONTAINERS IN MOTOR VEHICLES. My son Dustin was killed by a drunk driver in 2004. On the day he was killed, everything changed for our family. There would be no graduation to attend, no wedding ceremony, no grand children for us to enjoy. However, there would always be someone missing at every family gathering, an empty chair at the dinner table and a very large hole in each of our hearts. For a parent, there is nothing worse than losing a child. That's why I'm in favor of any legislation that would help reduce the possibility of any family suffering as we have.

In the last few years, Connecticut has made great strides by, first, in 2011, passing legislation requiring repeat offenders of drunk driving to install and maintain Ignition Interlock Devices. Last year at this time, legislation requiring all drunk drivers to use Ignition Interlock Devices was passed unanimously by both the House and the Senate and signed into law by the Governor. A statute prohibiting open containers of alcohol in vehicles would be another important step in the right direction.

Connecticut is one of only eleven states without an open container law. It's time to have one. Every 53 minutes, someone is killed by a drunk driver. Every 2 minutes, someone is injured. And every year, drunk driving costs us \$199 billion a year. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued the following statement, **"The enactment and enforcement of uniformly strong Open Container laws provides another potential means to help reduce drinking and driving, and could lead to further reductions in the numbers of alcohol-involved crashes."**

Mothers Against Drunk Driving endorses open container restrictions. What may be surprising however is that the public supports open container laws. 83 percent of people in states without an open container law said they would support such a law in their state.

There are reasons for the support.

- Open container laws save lives. One study found a 5.1% decrease in fatal crash rates in states that have open container laws.
- Open container laws reduce hit-and-run crashes. Maine, South Dakota and Rhode Island found a significant decrease in hit-and-run crashes after enacting open container laws.

Your car is not a bar or the couch in your living room. It's not a place for alcohol.

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