

Testimony regarding HB 6818

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ELECTRONIC TOLLS AT THE STATE'S BORDERS

I have several concerns with the State of CT installing tolls at out state borders.

1 Will these tolls be on every road that crosses our border with the adjoining states or just on the Interstate or major border crossings? If only on the major roads then assuredly the nearby local roads will suffer from increased traffic and accidents that result from people trying to avoid paying tolls.

2 I have had an EZ Pass electronic toll device since 1999. It has been a very useful and effective program in assisting my travels in areas where tolls are currently collected from Massachusetts and NY south to the Carolinas.

That said. There are many times when I approach a toll booth area where there are dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of vehicles backed up solely due to the existence of the tolls and the fact that a great many travelers do not use the currently available electronic toll devices. This creates traffic jams and safety hazards. The exact reasons used by the State of CT to remove the tolls in the first place.

Is the State going to mandate electronic toll devices on every vehicle that may ever cross our borders? Will tolls be collected from those without tags on the honor system or by taking photos and sending bills? At what cost?

3 My understanding is that this bill has been proposed so that the State of CT can extract more money from the pockets of only the people who enter and leave out state and use that money in the "Special Transportation Fund"

Does the word discrimination ring a bell? Why should people who do most or all of their driving within the state limits be exempt from paying more for the transportation system? What about those folks that cross our borders via trains, buses, airplanes, and horse drawn wagons? They are using transportation. They should pay more as well.

4 Then there is the absurd notion that all the money from these tolls will be used for transportation and only transportation. This General Assembly and Governor have made a habit of stealing money from the "Transportation Fund" and using it for other purposes and to plug holes in the lousy budgets that are passed in this state.

Previous General Assemblies and Governors have done the same thing for most of the 46 years that I've lived here. If all the money collected for the "Transportation Fund" had only been used for that purpose, then we wouldn't have the current "transportation system emergency" that Gov. Malloy and other politicians have been chicken little-ing about.

Elected officials have lied to taxpayers repeatedly about how money taken in to state coffers would be used for specific purposes. Gas tax to fix the roads. HA. Lottery and Casino revenue was to be used for education. Really? To name just a few.

I, for one, don't believe that any General Assembly can write a bill that will keep these funds in a "Lock Box" that won't be opened and raided by some future GA or Governor. At the very least, there will be some smart politician that will write a bill to redefine what can be called transportation and misappropriate the money that way.

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