Testimony by Lieutenant Thomas Mrozek, Fairfield Police Department

Support House Bill 7025
"An Act Concerning the Operation of a Motor Vehicle While Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor or Any Drug, and While A Child Is In the Motor Vehicle"
March 20, 2015

Good Afternoon. My name is Lieutenant Thomas Mrozek, Fairfield Police Department, I have been a police officer for the Town of Fairfield for over 30 years. Thank you Co-Chair Colman, Co-Chair Tong and the members of the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 7025, *"An Act Concerning the Operation of a Motor Vehicle While Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor or Any Drug, and While A Child Is In the Motor Vehicle"*

I have been the Shift Commander for the day shift for more than 5 years. During this time, my officers have become increasingly upset upon investigating cases that typically result in a DUI crash at occurs that 8AM and finding that it's a mother who driving her young children to school and ultimately crashes her vehicle. Upon further investigation at the department Headquarters, it is learned this is her third DUI arrest, second offense with her kids in the car. The most recent arrest resulted in being charged with Risk of Injury to a Minor. The more frustrating part is later the arresting officers hear the charges have been dropped or reduced by the courts.

There have been countless times that my officers and myself have charged the operators of a motor vehicle, parents driving home after dinner at a restaurant, with having too much to drink. Many of them crash their cars with their children as passengers. Resulting in an arrest for DUI, and because of the children, the charge Risk of Injury to a Minor is added. More often than not, we see the Risk of Injury dropped, reduced or a diversion program granted by the courts, much to our frustration. House Bill 7025 supports a long overdue Child Endangerment Law, specifically for Driving Under the Influence, which increases the penalty for driving drunk with children as passengers. In addition, a longer use of an Ignition Interlock Device affords children a better chance of a safe future and protect them from becoming another statistic because of irresponsible choices of a parent or an adult driver. I support a Child Endangerment law specific to Driving Under the Influence in order to keep innocent children safe. **Every child deserves a sober designated driver.** Thank you.