

My name is Cindy Penkoff of Trumbull Connecticut and I am a life-long resident of the state. I am here on behalf of myself and my family to testify on House Bill 6818. I sat here 2 years ago and nothing has changed. Here we sit again as you attempt to implement something dangerous, costly to the taxpayers and in all honesty, a lie, as you take the lazy man's way out of doing your job. The one the taxpayers sent you here to do.

The last 2 years have been spent doing what I call telling The Tale of the Tolls.

The Tale of the Tolls goes something like this. "We want to put in these magic money makers so that we can afford to give you nice smooth roads and safe trains. Not to worry we are going to let those out of town people, who ruined our roads in the first place, pay for it. And we promise not to use the money for anything else; cross our hearts." Doesn't that make you all warm and fuzzy?

As we all know, with every fairytale comes reality. The DOT Commissioner and the Budget Director can't equate any numbers to tolls because they don't have them. Even if you take the revenue that was established by tolls in the past, the ones you spent on everything but transportation and roads, and base them to today's economy, it doesn't even come close to what you need. Not to mention the payback on the toll structures themselves which is in the billions. Then we have to deal with the cost of annual upkeep and man power. Yeah, more state jobs.

How about the tolls themselves? Well while everyone is getting excited about "not the same old tolls", "not the same danger" or that new buzz term "border tolls", here is another hole in the fairytale. Overhead tolls are not an option. Connecticut does not have reciprocity with all other states which means structures built on our roads. It also means on all our road not just borders because that is illegal, they must be on ALL STATE ROADS.

You see the goal is to get everyone excited about an easy fix to our transportation issues and then once they get all excited and tell you to move ahead, it will be too late and the taxpayer, the CT taxpayer, will be paying the bill. And we are not talking some little road repair. We are talking about billions in neglect and \$100 billion dollars of unfunded spending proposals. On every state road, every day of your life; you will be the target of the state machine, a standing target every time you stop or coast through a toll booth. This puts every one of us, our teen drivers, our elderly parents, our families in danger. And paying for the privilege to do so.

I will venture to guess that 98% of the legislators in Hartford are here because you made certain promises to your constituents. I will bet your sound bites included:

1. We need to cut spending
2. We need to be more business friendly
3. We need a responsible budget
4. We need to cut taxes

5. We need to change the conversation
6. We need to communicate better
7. We need to be willing to work together

This is the same list I read 2 years ago. Again nothing has changed.

Instead of decreasing the cost to live in Connecticut it will increase that cost for every person in the state; another tax. This is nothing more than a shell game being played and you are using taxpayers as your game pieces.

What this proposal really does is spend money we don't have and will give you yet another fund to raid for the spending you refuse to cut. I don't believe you can write a proposal or law strong enough to keep you from raiding this fund. In other words, no I don't trust you. You've given me no reason to.

This is what I call low hanging fruit. Not what you were all hired to do. You were hired to cut unnecessary and bloated spending. Trim down oversized government that duplicates efforts and therefore cost. Find ways to be business friendly to attract more companies to Connecticut. You accomplish NONE of that with this proposal.

This "recycled idea" in fact does the opposite of all that. It makes it less attractive to travelers, it makes it more expensive to live here or move here, and it does nothing to reduce the size of government employees, the largest employer in our state.

We demand that you stop playing games and do the jobs you were hired to do. The State of Connecticut can no longer afford to have you sit in those seats and pretend to speak on our behalf.

As I started this I told you who I was and who I represent. Although fiscal responsibility and your duty to live up to your promises is extremely important to me, as I would like to afford to stay in my home state, it is not the only reason I sit before you today.

32 years ago my family lost 2 young lives in the Stratford Toll accident. Joey was 6 years old. He died when the car he was riding in with his best friend who also died, exploded after being hit from behind by a truck driver who fell asleep at the wheel. His 18 year old sister also died in that fiery crash. I put part of the blame for that accident on the irresponsible driver and part of the blame on a stationary building erected by the state of Connecticut under the guise of collecting money to take care of roads; money that never got used for that purpose. Therefore, in my opinion an accident that never needed to happen. Had they not been slowed down for that toll, they would be here today.

I find myself thinking about Tammy, then 18, and Joey, then 6, quite often and wonder what they would have been like now. I have decided Tammy would have had a house full of children, and would now be a grandmother, **since she left behind a 2 week old son** who has 2 children of his own and she would have loved growing old. Should would not dye her hair, she would just let it go grey and be proud of it. She would have loved Uggs!

Joey, would have been an engineer or a builder. He loved to take things apart to see how they worked. He also would have been a great dad and a great uncle. He loved his little brother Mark and pushed him to succeed and grow, even at his young age.

So today, I choose to think about the fine, fun loving and dear people I know they would have been. I continue to be grateful for a toll taker that day, for protecting our Mark, and God for allowing our family to move on, when on that day, none of us ever thought it would be possible.

I ask you to stop telling tall tales and to do your job. It's not an easy one and no one ever promised you it would be, but selling out the people you claim to represent was never a part of that job description either.

Thank you.

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