

John Carbone
Deputy Chief of the Clinton Police Department
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill #365
An Act Concerning Child Endangerment While Driving Intoxicated
March 7, 2016

Thank you Co-Chairman Eric Coleman, Co-Chairman William Tong and members of the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to testify in support of Raised Senate Bill #365, An Act Concerning Child Endangerment While Driving Intoxicated.

My name is John Carbone. I am a 25 year veteran of the Clinton Police Department and currently serve as the Deputy Chief. During my career I have been involved in hundreds, if not thousands, of drunk driving arrests.

I have stopped numerous intoxicated drivers who have had a child in the car. In each every instance the parent of that child was also in the car. Children are innocent and rely on their parents for safety. This crime, therefore, is a betrayal of the most fundamental trust.

Though I have seen many such arrests, I want to highlight three that I believe illustrate what we face:

- During the summer of 2012, I received a report of an intoxicated adult male who had just docked his boat and was driving away from the marina with his ten year old daughter. I stopped that car and arrested the man. During the stop he accused me of frightening his child and then complained that, 'His day with his daughter was being unnecessarily interrupted by the police.' I learned from his soon-to-be ex-wife that she feared he was drinking during court ordered visitations. She was divorcing the man because he was an abusive alcoholic and yet she was legally bound to let him drive away with their child every week.
- Also during the summer of 2012 I was running laser speed enforcement early in the evening when my group stopped an SUV. The driver was the 21 year old boyfriend of the front seat passenger, a 26 year old female. In the back seat were her 4 year old little girl and an 18 year old nanny. The group had just come from a day of drinking wine at the beach. There were open containers in the vehicle. The operator

provided a breath sample that was more than twice the legal limit. Both the 28 year old mother and 18 year old nanny were also intoxicated. The nanny could barely walk. The only sober person in that vehicle was the helpless child.

- In late September of 2015 I was present at a sobriety checkpoint. At approximately 0130HRS everything was quiet when an approaching sedan came to an abrupt stop within ten yards of the contact officers. The sedan paused briefly, as if the operator was trying to figure out why there were so many officers and flashing lights. Suddenly he threw the sedan into reverse and smashed into a second vehicle. The sedan's tires squealed as it turned and fled. Stunned officers chased both on foot and in cruisers. Because so many officers were on scene to give immediate pursuit, we were able to get the sedan stopped within a tenth of a mile. The responding officers raced to confront the 25 year old male operator and were horrified to see, through the back window, an unsecured child carrier wedged in between the front and back seats. That carrier contained the operator's 9 day old child. Also in the vehicle were the child's mother and an 18 year old female who was in possession of a Stun gun and marijuana. The operator was tested and determined to be intoxicated.

I think it is important to clarify that children don't choose to get into a car operated by a drunk adult: they have no choice. We are asking that you to enact legislation that more properly addresses this dangerous crime. We need to get the message out that there is an additional penalty for driving drunk with a child passenger. We are asking for a platform.

Thank you.