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## State of Connecticut

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#### Testimony

### **R.H.B. 5276 An Act Requiring Instructions For Dialing 9-1-1 On Or Adjacent To Certain Multiline Telephones**

#### **Public Safety and Security Committee**

**March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

Chairman Senator Larson, Chairman Representative Dargan, Ranking Member Senator Guglielmo, Ranking Member Representative Zupkus, and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify and offer written testimony in support of RHB 5276 An Act Requiring Instructions For Dialing 9-1-1 On Or Adjacent To Certain Multiline Telephones.

This bill, as written, is a good first step, however we need to do more than display instructions on how to access 9-1-1 service. I will request the Committee to consider that all businesses and all agencies must program the multiple telephone systems to allow the user to place a 9-1-1 call without having to dial a truncation code. Multiline telephone systems allow businesses and government agencies to have multiple lines on one phone switch. This system allows personnel within the business or agency to place calls between their numerous offices and buildings served by the switch, however some systems are programmed to restrict out-going calls by requiring the user to first dial a truncation code, such as "9". This restriction is very easy to overcome and according to telecommunication experts, virtually all multiline telephone systems can be easily configured to allow unrestricted calls to 9-1-1 at little to no cost and without requiring new hardware to be installed.

FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai, in a June 2014 statement, concluded that based on data gathered from the MLTS and lodging communities, "There does not appear to be any technical reason why modern MLTS systems cannot allow direct access to emergency personnel. And it should not cost much to eliminate any access code requirements for existing systems, although it may require technical expertise and coordination with MLTS manufacturers or vendors." Similar laws exist in Texas, Illinois and Maryland, as well as Suffolk County, New York.

Some systems may have the capability of dialing direct 9-1-1 and others may have to be programmed. Accidental calls to 9-1-1 happen. One could dial nine for an outside line and then dial one as a prefix to a toll call and mistakenly could dial another one. To make matters worse, users often hang up if they realize that they have dialed 9-1-1 accidentally. There is the possibility that first responders would arrive at a building where no emergency exists, though this is a small price to pay when 9-1-1 is a life-saving mechanism.

I urge you to consider adding the above changes to R.H.B 5276 to protect Connecticut's residents and I will continue to make myself available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify and for the great work this Committee has accomplished.

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