

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7378

AN ACT CONCERNING NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE WITH A MOTOR VEHICLE

Title: AND ILLEGAL RACING.

Vote Date: 4/9/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/25/2019

File No.: 789

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

REASONS FOR BILL:

Statistics have shown that the number of incidents of illegal racing and deaths from such activity has risen dramatically.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Submitted

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

JUAN CANDELARIA, STATE REPRESENTATIVE: Supports this bill. Student drivers are currently instructed in safe driving habits and skills, motor vehicle laws and regulations. Although these areas are taught in a full duration driving course, the eight-hour mandatory course includes only four hours for the nature and effects of alcohol and drugs, and only two hours of safe driving practices. This bill raises penalties, not only as a means of deterrence, but to provide the families with a sense of closure, justice and safety.

LIZA HERRERA: Supports this bill. We lost our daughter, Shalymar, in a street racing accident. She was a passenger along with her friend Brianna Torres and her unborn daughter Luna. The current laws are not severe enough to deter this type of activity. The maximum penalty for negligent homicide with a motor vehicle is not more than \$1000.00 and not more than six months imprisonment or both. The penalty for illegal racing is not less than \$75.00 or more than \$600.00 and not more than one year imprisonment or both. The court may order the vehicle to be impounded for not more than thirty days. I would like to see the

penalties increased even more, so they will have even greater power to deter would-be street racers before they even set foot into their car.

JELIAN HERRERA: Supports this bill. I lost my sister Shalymar in a street racing accident. It has been the hardest thing that has ever happened to me. I hope you will pass this bill so other families will not have to go through this and so other boys and girls don't lose their siblings for being in a reckless driving accident.

SHEILA OPPENHEIMER, FAIRFIELD,CT.: Supports this bill. Last April I received a call from my son Sean that Shalymar had been killed in a motor vehicle accident. This tragedy occurred in the context of illegal street racing. There are no words, there are no ways which could adequately express the sorrow and sadness to which I bore witness following this tragedy. Please pass this bill to raise awareness of significant repercussions and fear of significant consequences to deter and prevent this senseless, reckless tragedy from occurring again.

SEAN OPPENHEIMER, FAIRFIELD,CT. Supports this bill. I favor this bill to strengthen the penalties associated with illegal street racing and negligent homicide with a motor vehicle because illegal street racing took the life of my friend Shalymar. While all horrific car crashes like this one can never be completely prevented, this bill takes a very important step in reducing the chances that this tragedy will happen to another family or community.

DIANE WILCZEWSKI: Supports this bill. Our precious daughter Courtney age 22, was killed in a horrific accident. This was not an accident but a careless disregard of the driver's medical condition which caused a head on collision with our daughter ending in her tragic death. Charged with negligent homicide, the driver only spent 30 days in jail and a short 18 months on probation. Dealing with the loss is horrible enough but then to find out the laws are so lenient is another knife to our hearts. The additional time and higher fees might just deter someone from making a bad decision and save someone's life.

DYAIJA D. SORIANO, WEST HAVEN,CT.: Supports this bill. I lost my best friend all because two sober teens wanted to have fun and race on a two way street. If you pass this bill we will no longer have to worry about teens recklessly driving and putting their lives along with others in danger.

HILDA ROSAS, SAVANNAH RODRIGUEZ, NEW HAVEN, CT, AMELIA SANTOYO, JULLISSA TORES, BRIDGEPORT, CT. TONDALOA IVERY, ANNA GOTAY, RICARDO SEALY, ISAAC MCBRIDE, MERIDEN, CT. JOHNNY BAIRAKTARIS, FAIRFIELD, CT., IVETTE RODRIGUEZ, NEW HAVEN, CT., DANTE KEVON GUESS, ROSA SANCHEZ: Support this bill. The above listed residents shared their personal relationship with the victim of street racing. They shared the personal and emotional pain and suffering of the loss and urge passage of this bill.

TASHIRA SUAREZ ACEVEDO, MILDRED ALVAREZ, FRANSHELIE PELLOT-ALVAREZ, MARILYN BURGOS, BRIDGEPORT, STEPHANIE RIVERA, HARTFORD,CT. ; Support this bill. The above residents submitted similar testimony supporting the increasing of penalties for illegal racing and homicide with a motor vehicle.

SONIA HENRY, STAMFORD, CT. ; Supports this bill. Sonia Henry lost her son to an automobile accident where the driver of the offending vehicle was estimated to be traveling 140 mph in a 25 mph zone. She related the horrific scene of her son's dismembered body. She stated driving 45 mph in a 25 mph zone may be an accident but at 140 mph, that's murder!

DR. RAELEEN D'AGOSTINO MAUTNER, WALLINGFORD, CT.: Supports this bill. Dr. Mautner relayed several incidents, nationwide, involving deaths caused by illegal street racing. Passing this bill may not only serve as a deterrent, but may also help to bring more awareness to the community, ---a community which should include parents, teachers, doctors and religious leaders who are in a position to help disseminate information about the consequences and risks associated with drag racing.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted

Reported by: George Marinelli

April 29, 2019