

**Public Safety and Security Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

Bill No.: SB-1036

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GREATER HARTFORD REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE TO COMBAT ILLEGAL ROADWAY TRAFFIC

Title: ACTIVITY.

Vote Date: 3/16/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/23/2023

File No.: 382

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee
CO-Sponsor: Rep Gary Turco

REASONS FOR BILL:

Reckless driving on Connecticut roads and highways have increased and need to be addressed. The establishment of the Greater Hartford Regional Law Enforcement Task Force is another tool for law enforcement to enforce our existing laws.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Rep. Amy Morrin Bello, 28th Dist:

Rep. Bello writes in support of this bill. Legislators have seen reports of dangerous driving, and on our own commutes to the Capitol have witnessed dangerous driving on our highways, major routes and side streets. Dangerous drivers going at extreme speeds, going the wrong way and weaving in and out of traffic in no passing zones and forming illegal gatherings of vehicles in roadways and parking lots. I hope this taskforce will have the necessary funding and manpower to better help deter illegal gatherings. Our law enforcement officers need all the tools they can have at hand to assist in enforcement of our current law.

Michael L. Rell, Mayor, Town of Wethersfield, Connecticut: Drivers are congregating on our state's major thoroughfares, blocking intersections, doing donuts and burnouts, along with

ATVs and dirt bike riders paying no mind to other drivers on the roads as they rally and speed past motorists frozen in place unable to navigate through the congregation of riders. The major offenders re not from the area where these events take place. These events are organized online through social media by individuals in groups that are hard for police to infiltrate. Some groups are from towns outside of Greater Hartford and even as far away as New York and Massachusetts. Most ATVs and dirt bikes are stolen, unregistered and uninsured. Our local police do not engage in pursuit and will not chase ATVs and dirt bikes making it hard to hold those accountable for these events.

I would like to offer some suggestions to the committee for future consideration: Legislation to combat these events should incorporate technology such as drones, Star Chase, surveillance equipment and social media monitoring software to locate and arrest those involved. The legislature should also consider stiffer penalties for the organizers of these events. Hold organizers responsible for injuries, accidents and traffic-related issues that these actions cause.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Council for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT):

The most frequent way that police come into contact with community members is through traffic enforcement. Far too many encounters that begin as traffic stops end with Black people dead at the hands of police. A report from the Connecticut Racial Profiling Project, for stops in 2018 states that drivers of color were stopped were stopped in disparate numbers and were much more likely to be searched than white drivers, despite being less likely to have contraband discovered during a search. Because of disparities in traffic enforcement the legislature should be careful when making new traffic infractions. If there are already laws on the books which would cover new infractions, those existing laws should be used. If there is no mechanism for enforcing the contemplated behavior, the legislature should way very carefully whether the public safety needs to enforce the traffic regulation outweigh the public safety needs to limit police traffic stops.

Gary Corigliano, Officer: I oppose all bills as they are listed in direct violation of the 2nd amendment of the United States Constitution.

Reported by: Maureen O'Reilly

Date: March 20, 2023