

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 19-53

HB7378

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Connecticut
Gen.Assembly
House

Proceedings
2019

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Part 12

9665-10698

AFTER RECESS

The House reconvened at 8:50 o'clock p.m., Deputy Speaker Ryan in the Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

[Gavel] The Chamber will come back into session and we will stand-at-ease.

The Chamber will come back to order [Gavel]. Are there any announcements or introductions? Hearing none, will the Clerk please call Calendar No. 497.

CLERK:

On Page 59, Calendar 497, Substitute House Bill No. 7378, AN ACT CONCERNING NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE WITH A MOTOR VEHICLE AND ILLEGAL RACING. Favorable Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.
DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom from Bridgeport, you have the floor.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move for Acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and Passage of the Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

The question is Acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and Passage of the Bill. Representative Stafstrom, you have the floor.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us comes out of the Judiciary Committee and received unanimous support of the Committee at which the Committee was struck by the testimony of the family of a Veteran by the name of Shalymar who was killed in a motor vehicle accident up in Shelton as a result of illegal street racing. Mr. Speaker, illegal street racing both in our cities and on some of our suburban and rural roads has become an increasing problem in the State of Connecticut. Folks who seem to find it fun to get out, get behind the wheel, drive as fast as they can racing someone else posing significant risk of injury or death to other motorists or pedestrians. Mr. Speaker, in looking at our current penalties for negligent homicide with a motor vehicle and illegal street racing it was certainly the belief of the Committee

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that our current penalties are too low, the Bill before us seeks to increase those penalties and I would ask for the Chamber's support.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Thank you, Representative. Representative Rebimbas of the 70th, ma'am you have the floor.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the proposal before us and as the good Chairman had indicated it did come out of the Judiciary Committee unanimously. Unfortunately this is one of those incidences that this Bill comes before us as a result of a very, very tragic death that occurred as a result of illegal racing. So just a few questions.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

To the good Chairman.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Please proceed.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the good Chairman can highlight and I know that in his introduction he

had indicated that there were fines that were being increased as a result of the proposal before us, if he can highlight what those fines are?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under current law negligent operation of a motor vehicle that results in a homicide has two classifications whether that motor vehicle is a commercial vehicle or not. Under present law if the motor vehicle is not a commercial vehicle then negligent operation is punishable by fine up to \$1,000 dollars and up to six months in prison. If the motor vehicle is a commercial motor vehicle then under current law that offense is punishable by a fine of up to \$250,000 dollars and six months in prison. Under the Bill we would increase and conform those two penalties and negligent operation of any motor vehicle would be punishable by a fine of up to \$3,500 and up to three years in prison or both.

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Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

If the good Chairman knows why do we have a distinction between commercial vehicles versus regular vehicles.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I think it was, certainly I'm speculating as to the original drafters of this original legislation some years ago, certainly prior to my service in the legislature but I can speculate that folks thought that negligent operation with a commercial vehicle was somehow more risky to public safety than a noncommercial vehicle. The reason that we are moving to conform these two penalties is certainly

negligent homicide is negligent homicide and whether you were driving a truck or driving a car in a negligent manner that results in a homicide you should be punished accordingly.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

Are these fines criminal or civil?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

These are the criminal penalties, certainly someone who is operating a motor vehicle in a negligent manner or that causes personal injury likely would also be subject to a civil lawsuit.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe it was highlighted what the first offense of the fines were. If the good Chairman wouldn't mind indicating what subsequent offenses fines would be?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I apologize, I actually had only highlighted the fines that increase under the Bill for negligent operation of a motor vehicle. The fines under this Bill would also increase for the offense of driving a motor vehicle on a public road for purposes of betting, racing or making a speed record. Those fines would also increase. Under the Bill the maximum fine for first offense would be \$150 dollars and would be \$300 dollars for any subsequent

offense.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

Does this proposal before us make any changes to what the Department of Motor Vehicles can take action upon?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. In fact under the Bill someone who is guilty of the offense of speed racing or trying to make a speed record could be required to attend an operators retraining program administered under the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

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REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

Does the good Chairman know whether or not
there is any type of fiscal impact associated with
the proposal that is before us?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

As with any time we increase penalties there is
obviously the risk that someone will spend a longer
time in incarceration and there is an associated
cost of that for the Department of Corrections.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

If the good Chairman could indicate what the

purpose is behind the proposal of increasing the fines?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

They are punitive in nature and as I indicated the rationale for the Bill is having looked at having had this issue brought to our attention by certainly some powerful testimony at the Committee level we thought it was appropriate to raise the fines for these two particular offenses under our law.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

Many times we have certain penalties that may depending on the perpetrators age may have different

tiers of fines or different tiers of punishment does exist in this in this proposal anywhere?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe there is only one tier of fines but of course the fines are the maximum fines, the court has discretion to issue a fine that is less than the maximum amount prescribed.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And often times there's discussion regarding the developmental age of a juvenile versus an adult. In this case are we making any type of differentiations, considerations for maybe a juvenile under the age of 18 that may be obviously facing the negligent homicide charge versus an adult

in their 50s?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The age of majority remains unchanged under this Bill pursuant to our existing Juvenile Justice Statute.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

And just to clarify my question a little bit better, is there differentiating treatment. So are we treating the juveniles, minors any different than an adult?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The maximum penalties and fines for that are not prescribed in this particular Bill was my point but certainly whether somebody could be charged as an adult or minor remains unchanged pursuant to our other guidelines for that in our current law.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

Is there any distinction in this Bill as to whether or not the individual is racing their own personal car versus a car that may have been stolen?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

There is not.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): a

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And does the good Chairman have any statistics regarding how many times there's these types of incidents of street racing that takes place in the State of Connecticut?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not have the statistics as to how many people may be out on our roads street racing on any given night but the fiscal note does indicate that there are currently 30 individuals incarcerated for the offenses for which we are discussing here today and that there are 41 individuals on probation. That is certainly, the folks that were incarcerated are on probation would be a small subset of those who were convicted and that being a small subset of those who were charged with the offenses we're speaking with here today.

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Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe during the testimony during the Public Hearing we had heard that there are times that these fines are actually never even levied on an individual. Has that changed in the sense in the proposal that is before us, is there anything that makes this mandatory or once again will an officer or prosecutor later on have the ability to negotiate down this charge for another charge or certainly is there anything else that has changed in this proposal that would change that ability to do that?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not believe there are any mandatory

minimum sentences prescribed in this Bill. Certainly prosecutor and judge or ultimately jury if there was a conviction, has a degree of discretion into the amount of the penalty handed out.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Representative Rebimbas.

I want to take the opportunity to thank the good Chairman for all of his responses and I do as I indicated rise in support of the proposal before us. Again unfortunately it comes from a very tragic story and it was one of which many of us from the Judiciary Committee hearing through the Public Hearing from the very family unfortunately to have lost their loved one as a result of street racing. It was something that everyone felt the duty and responsibility to want to do. Again we can only hope that maybe this increase in fine may be a deterrent, unfortunately I think many times when we are dealing with juveniles that may not even be something that is in their mind sadly. One would almost think that anytime you hear of a death as a

result of this reckless behavior that in and of itself would be a deterrent. But again hopefully through this there could be some public education and public announcements and people learn from other people's mistakes in that regard. So I do rise in support of legislation before us and certainly again I think, you know, we do have a responsibility to try to curtail any type of criminal action whenever we can and not just the act of racing but I think it has been a practice sadly of street racing associated with the stolen vehicle aspect of things too. So hopefully the message will get out that this is something that should be avoided, not just for the fines but the mere fact that this can cause someone's life and the impact that is felt on that for a family is forever. So, Mr. Speaker I rise in support of the proposal before us.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Thank you, Representative. Will you remark further on the Bill before us? Will you remark further on the Bill before us? Representative Dimassa of the 116th District, sir you have the

floor.

REP. DIMASSA (116TH):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this Bill. I think all of us on the Judiciary Committee who heard the testimony was absolutely heart wrenching. This family of the individual happens to reside in my district and of course it was a very, very strong loss for us and I believe this is a measured approach to address a very, very serious issue which hopefully we will see a decrease in these fatalities. So I also want to mention that it is important to thank the late Representative Santiago and also Representative Candelora who are not here but they were strong advocates of this Bill from the start. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Thank you, sir. Representative Rosario of the 128th, sorry.

REP. ROSARIO (128TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good to see you up there. I rise in strong support of this Bill with a

heavy heart. Twofold, one I had the opportunity to meet with Shalymar's family and to see and hear the pain on their loss was something that was deeply profound to me. This is a young woman whose life was cut unfortunately too short and she served our country proudly and secondly, our good friend and late colleague, Representative Ezequiel Santiago this is one of the Bills at the beginning of session that he came to me and said, "Chris would you support me on this" and never in a million years that I think that I would be testifying on this Bill because he wouldn't be there. So I am just merely standing up and speaking up for Ezequiel since he is not here physically but his work lives through us and is going to continue on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Thank you, Representative. I am sure Representative Santiago appreciates your support and your speaking on his behalf this evening. Will you remark further on the Bill before us? Will you remark further on the Bill? If not will Staff and

guests please come to the Well of the House. Will the Members please take your seats, the machine will be open when Staff and Members come to the floor of the House. [Ringing]

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll,
Members to the Chamber. The House of
Representatives is voting by roll, Members to the
Chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Have all members voted? Have all members
voted? Will the members please check the board to
determine if your vote is properly cast. If all
members have voted, the machine will be locked, the
Clerk will take a tally.

The Clerk will please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill No. 7378

Total Number Voting	144
Necessary for Passage	73
Those voting Yea	144
Those voting Nay	0

Absent not voting 6

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

The Bill passes [Gavel]. Are there any introductions or announcements? Any introductions or announcements? Representative Gucker of the 138th, sir, you have the floor.

REP. GUCKER (138TH):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise an announcement.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

Please proceed.

REP. GUCKER (138TH):

I want to make sure that everybody know that tomorrow at eleven o'clock in Old Approps is Danbury Day [Cheering]. It is my first attempt as the newest member of the Danbury Delegation I have to put it on and I'll look bad if you don't show up. So everybody show up, lets have a good time and please support us. We are honoring Marion Anderson and we will also have some other honorees from Danbury. So, please come and visit us. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN (139TH):

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Those voting Yea	33
Those voting Nay	3
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] The measure is adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Could we stand at ease for a moment?

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I would like to call a number of items for our Consent Calendar, please? Place a number of items on our Consent Calendar I should say.

THE CHAIR:

Yes, please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. On Calendar page 21, Calendar 374, House Bill 6403, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 25, Calendar 412, House Bill 7168, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 27, Calendar 425, House Bill 7229, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 32, Calendar 479, House Bill 7378, I'd to place that

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item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 36, Calendar 506, House Bill 7130, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 37, Calendar 511, House Bill 5455, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 38, Calendar 521, House Bill 7093, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 40, Calendar 537, House Bill 6927, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 50, Calendar 602, House Bill 7165, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 50, Calendar 605, House Bill 6916, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 51, Calendar 606, House Bill 5125, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 52, Calendar 611, House Bill 5779, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 52, Calendar 612, House Bill 7291, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar. On Calendar page 61, Calendar 66, I'm sorry, Calendar page 660, I'm sorry, Calendar page 61, Calendar 660, House Bill 7212, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Senate stand at ease please.

THE CHAIR:

Senate will stand at ease. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. One more for the consent calendar please?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Calendar page 61, Calendar 659, House Bill 7063, I'd to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, if the Clerk can now read back the items on the Consent Calendar followed by a vote on the Consent Calendar, please.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1. Senate Bill 1069, page 21, Calendar 374, House Bill 6403, page 25, Calendar 412, House Bill 7168, page 27, Calendar 425, House Bill 7229, page 27, Calendar 421, House Bill 6522, page 32, Calendar 479, House Bill 7378, page 36, Calendar 506, House Bill 7130, page 37, Calendar 511, House Bill 5455, page 38, Calendar 521, House

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Bill 7093, page 40, Calendar 537, House Bill 6927, page 50, Calendar 602, House Bill 7165, page 50, Calendar 605, House Bill 6916, page 51, Calendar 606, House Bill 5125, page 52, Calendar 611, House Bill 5779, page 52, Calendar 612, House Bill 7291, page 61, Calendar 660, House Bill 7212, page 61, Calendar 659, House Bill 7063, and page 66, Calendar 226, Senate Bill 424.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, if you would kindly call the vote, the machine will be opened, sir.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 1. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 1. An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate on Consent Calendar No. 1. Immediate roll call vote in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all the Senators voted? Have all the Senators voted? The machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally.

CLERK:

Consent Calendar No. 1.

Total number voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

[Gavel] The Consent Calendar is adopted. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move immediate transmittal of all items needing further action to the House of Representatives, please.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, does the Clerk have Senate Agenda No. 4 on his desk, please?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:

The Clerk is in possession of Senate Agenda No. 4 dated Tuesday, June 4, 2019.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Madam President, I move immediate all items on Senate Agenda No. 4 dated Tuesday, June 4, 2019 be

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down, as Mr. Pelka [laughter] said, down 17 percent over ten years, 43 percent over 20, and that juvenile participation has remained relatively constant.

Sensationalism makes it seem like Connecticut is dealing with a particularly violent -- virulent strain of this epidemic. Data tells us that a recent uptick over the last few years is in line with national trends.

Public-facing comments about recidivists and repeat offenders that falsely attribute juvenile crime to Raise the Age Reforms and/or the closing of CJTS lead to bills prompting the transfer of juveniles to adult court. I'm almost done. Data shows that putting juveniles in adult prison is cruel and dangerous, deprives them of important education and rehabilitation opportunities, cost far more than upstream and downstream diversion and intervention programs, and that the more time juveniles spend in confinement the more likely they are to reoffend, all this and it doesn't even help public safety.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the Committee? No? All set.

MARIANNE FICHTEL: Thank you.

REP. STRAFSTROM (129TH): Next up will be Natasha Pierre.

HB 7389

SB 504

HB 7378

NATASHA PIERRE: Good afternoon, Mr. Stafstrom and members of the Committee. I'm Natasha Pierre the State Victim Advocate. I'm here today to speak in support of raised Bill 7314, AN ACT CONCERNING A CRIME VICTIM'S PARTICIPATORY RIGHTS IN A VIOLATION OF PROBATION OR CONDITIONAL DISCHARGE HEARING.

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juvenile and youth -- youthful offender proceedings as they are now.

For the last section of -- I am opposed to Section 2 of raised Bill 7389, which should come as no surprise, as I said on JJPOC, and voted against it. But it would have a blanket on prohibition against any person under 18 being detained and incarcerated in any correctional facility operated by the DOC.

Right now, crime victims may register to receive notification of an offender's incarceration status through the Victim Services Unit. Victims can receive notice of their release or notice of anything going on that they -- that may impact their decision-making. It allows them to address safety concerns and other issues. So, you know, the sad reality is that some juveniles do commit murder and sexual assault, and we need to have a way to manage that, and the language seems to not do that.

And the finale thing, which is not for me, but I just want to know for the record that a client, Diane Wilczewski submitted written testimony to you in support of raised Bill 7378 regarding negligent homicide with a motor vehicle. She lost her child in 2015 in a car accident, and the person only get nine months for negligent -- no, only spent 30 days in jail and a short 18 months on probation. And he basically, not only had a medical condition and went and drove and the -- and hit her child and killed her. So, she's in support of that bill which would address that matter.

HB 7389

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the Committee? Representative Walker.

NATASHA PIERRE: Yeah. I saw you coming. So --

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help us get through the list that way.
Representatives, the floor is yours.

REP. CANDELARIA (95TH): Good afternoon,
Chairman Stafstrom, Senator Winfield,
Senator Kissel, Representative members, and members
of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to
come before you and testify in support of Bill 7378.
This is a Bill that initially was introduced as
proposed Bill 6720. And the reason I mention that,
because I want to recognize that Representative
Ezequiel Santiago was critical in working with me to
submit this Bill before you. So, I want to take the
opportunity to acknowledge that.

But I don't want to go into details of the Bill.
You have the Bill before. I submitted written
testimony. Because I want to give the opportunity
to the parents to say a few words and you can hear
their testimony. And then, I will be available for
any questions you may have. So, I'm going to yield
this time right now to Representative Rosario.
Thank you.

REP. ROSARIO (128TH): Good afternoon,
Chairman Stafstrom, Chairman Winfield, Members of
the Judiciary Committee. I, too, am here in support
of HB 7378, AN ACT CONCERNING NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE
WITH A MOTOR VEHICLE AND ILLEGAL RACING. My friend,
and all our friend and dear colleague,
Representative Ezequiel Santiago was very
instrumental in putting this forward. And I am here
on his behalf, along with the advocates that he
worked closely to make sure families get justice
here in the state of Connecticut. So, at this time
I would like to yield my time to the parents of

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Shalymar Herrera, who were affected by this tragedy.
Thank you.

LIZA HERRERA: Good afternoon, Legislator. It -- it's a pleasure, an honor to come before you today. My name is Liza Herrera. And I am here to support Bill 7378. I lost my daughter on April 8, 2018, two hours after my son and I had spent the entire morning with her. She was everything to us. She had an amazing, humble, brave heart. Words cannot describe the impact she put in -- she put on this very earth.

Shalymar passed away in a horrific car accident due to -- due to negligent street racing. The crash took -- the crash not only took the life of our daughter; it took the life of other passengers that include Brianna Torres and her unborn daughter Luna who was due to be in a month. I often think, if the laws had been stricter with regards with street racing, the driver of the two cars involved might have thought twice before they decide to race with -- without regards to their life, the passenger or passerby that day.

My daughter was a soldier of the United States Army who was willing to put her life on the line to protect your freedom and mine. She was preparing to go to college to become a veterinarian. Shalymar's hopes -- hopes and dreams were all about a positive difference in the lives of others.

I will never see my daughter again grow to be an amazing woman. I can never listen -- I can never listen to her voice again. And I will never see her care for my son again the way that she used to. We want nothing more to see her prosper. While nothing will ever bring back our daughter, we have decided

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to turn over tragedy into something positive for others to help prevent this tragedy from happening to other families.

We want to see this Bill pass because it will increase the penalties for those who commit crimes like the one that killed our daughter. The passing of this Bill is extremely important to us. We cannot make this positive change in Connecticut laws happen without -- without your help. So, now ask that you please help us lower the likelihood of this happening to other family. We kindly thank you for your time and your consideration.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, ma'am. Thank you. Thank you so much for being here, for presenting your story, for the sacrifice of your daughter and her willingness to serve our country, you know. And I really want to thank the Representatives for bringing this to us. This is a huge problem on the streets, particularly in our cities, of street racing.

For whatever reason, folks have decided that they're going to get behind a wheel, they're gonna try to drive as fast as they can, and get kicks out of it. And it's not happenin', I -- at least I don't -- maybe it is, but -- but where it's particularly problematic is on streets of our cities in places where folks live close together, where they're walking from one shop to the next, where they're walking to the grocery store, walking home, and -- and tryin' to cross streets. You know, they're going down narrow roads with cars parked on both sides of it. And it -- I see it quite frequently.

I mean, it's not that uncommon for me to leave here at some late hour of the night, get home, get off on

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Exit 25 on Fairfield Avenue in Bridgeport, and, you know, it's a very narrow road, it's traffic on one side, the lanes are a little narrower than they should be, and -- and you constantly see people, you know, gunnin' the engine and -- and racing. And it is -- it is remarkable that we don't see more tragedies like this.

And, you know, I -- I really hope that this legislature will take to heart sort of the -- the concerns you've brought to us. And unfortunately, sometimes it takes horrible incidents around here for us to -- us to take action. But I certainly hope this is one instance where -- where we do that. So, thank you so much for being with us. Vice Chairman Blumenthal.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And Representative DiMassa, unfortunately couldn't be here right now because he had business back in the District, but he wanted us to read this statement.

Representative DiMassa had business back in the District, but he wanted to extend his full support on this Bill HB 7378 and thank Jesus and Liza for their -- for advocating for stricter penalties so that no family has to endure the tragic events that unfolded last year that took the life of their beloved daughter. He extends his deepest sympathy to the Herrera family and his hopes that this legislation will stand as a testament to the legacy of their daughter, Shalymar.

And I just wanted to extend my sympathies, as well, and thank you for your activism on this issue. And hopefully, that will lead to a situation where other families will not have to experience the terrible tragedy that you have. Senator Kissel.

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SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you very much, Chairman Stafstrom. To the two parents, you're incredibly brave. It's probably the -- the loneliest club in the world, are parents that have lost one of their children, and it's just a group that no one wants to be a part of. And I've met various parents who have lost children, it's just never good.

You're doing something very positive here. I will be supportive of this measure. I thank the two Representatives that are here with us and the late Representative Santiago who was a champion in this earlier. And your show of support, all of you, makes a difference. A lot of times back -- you talk to people, I talk to my constituents, and sometimes you'll get some folks that are jaded and they say, oh, well, you're gonna do whatever you want to do in Hartford or my voice doesn't matter or my vote doesn't matter. Well, that's wrong. Your voice, your presence here this afternoon has a tremendous impact. Not only visibly but you're championing a cause and trying to turn something good out of a great tragedy.

And so, I just want to thank you for being so brave to come before this Committee and express yourself so articulately on behalf of your daughter. And I'm sure she's in heaven looking down and thanking for her service to our country. And I know that my sentiments are shared by many others in the legislature, as well. So, thank you all for coming here.

LIZA HERRERA: Thank you.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions or comments from the Committee? Representative Dubitsky, followed by Representative Porter.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for coming in here to talk about this. I -- you know, my understanding is this is a -- a big problem in some areas. I, you know, have to admit that it -- it does not appear to be a problem where I am out in the -- in the -- the more rural areas, but clearly it's a problem in your -- in your area. And I want to do everything I can to help you solve that problem.

To that end, I -- I ask -- like, a -- a lot of people come to me with various Bills seeking to increase the penalty for something, thinking that increasing the penalty will eliminate or reduce the problem. In some instances it does, in some instances it doesn't. So, what I'm -- what I would ask you is, do you -- are -- are you aware of any instances where somebody has been caught and arrested, and because of a low penalty, has done it again? And the reason why I ask is because, you know, and -- and I'm -- I'm -- I'm gonna support this Bill, but I -- I -- I'm -- I'm wondering if there -- if we're -- we may be missing some enforcement end of this, and that simply raising the penalty may not have the effect that you're looking for. So, have you -- are -- are you aware of any enforcement issues with regard to street racing?

JESUS HERRERA: My name is Jesus Herrera. I'm Shalymar's father. The police told us, you know, they -- they give a lot of citations for stealing, for illegal racing. The problem is because they are so low, the people just going to keep doin' it

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because nobody wants a \$75-dollar ticket for illegal racing, it's cheaper than going to the racing track. You go to a racing track; you're going to pay \$150 dollars. You go in the street, if you get caught, you pay only \$75 dollars, if the police decide to give you a ticket or to give you a break. And I know -- we don't only want to increase the penalties, because we want to try to do something to prevent to get there. And just increasing the penalties will make people think -- think twice to do something. If you say, hey, if you -- you do illegal racing, you're going to get three months in jail and \$5,000 dollars, they're going to think it twice and say, hey, you just gonna get \$75 dollars. So, you know what, pay the \$75 dollars and I race some more again.

We also would like to modify the system in Motor Vehicle Department where they teach the new drivers what are the consequence for illegal racing, and not only for penalties, as far as the consequence for people that die, for people that get hurt. And -- and it's not only the people that get hurt and die, it's the family that stay behind suffering for life because whole life changes, and there's no coming back. And especially for the parents, it's hard to keep moving forward. Like people say, you know, be strong, move forward. Life is completely different now. I have to keep it strong and be positive, keep working every day because I have another son that he also deserve to have the same father, to have the same joys that her -- his sister had. You know, I have to keep going and skating with him. It's hard because she was always dancing with me. Now, it's only him. It's so many memories that sometime people say, memories is going to bring you joy to

your heart. It's -- it's hurt. It's memories that you can't repeat again. It's memories that hit you every second, everywhere that you go, everything that you do. You want to buy something for her, she's not there. You want to share something with her, she's not there.

So, we not only have to try to increase the penalties to make those people think a little better. But we also have to teach the new drivers and deliver the message out there what are the consequence and the suffering that their families are going to be having. It's -- it's not only be to punish someone, it's about to give they vocation before they do something, what's going to happen, look -- how the family suffer. Who -- and -- and then we're gonna engage the penalties? But you don't have excuse to say, I didn't know that, you know. So, let's try to implement this in the Motor Vehicle Department the same way they deal with alcohol. So, now the people that get alcohol, of course they have an excuse to say, I didn't know that because they have to take it in the test.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Clearly, you have more strength than -- than many to be able to -- to come here and -- and advocate after what's happened. And you know, certainly educating people before this happens is an important aspect of it. Do -- do you know that people do regularly get cited for the \$75 dollars? And if so, do they -- do they pay it?

JESUS HERRERA: Well, I don't have sort of information to respond to that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

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JESUS HERRERA: That would be, you know, we would have to do a deep search for it. And so, I can't really, you know, answer that question with -- with exact data.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, as we move forward with this, there's one thing you may wanna --

JESUS HERRERA: Get.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): -- also look at it is, you know, if people aren't paying the \$75 dollars, they're probably not going to pay \$1,000 dollars or \$3,000 dollars, because maybe the police won't even issue the citations --

JESUS HERRERA: Exactly.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): -- when they get that high. So, you know, enforcement of these fines is a key element. And if you -- you know, if -- if there's no enforcement, you could -- you can impose the death penalty and it won't help.

JESUS HERRERA: Yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, you know, we -- as -- as we -- as we move forward with this, you know, perhaps you can feed us some information on anything that you know, and -- you know, and perhaps the -- the good Representatives can -- can help that out. Because, you know, it -- it -- just increasing the penalty may not -- may actually make it worse, because maybe the police will stop giving citations if they're so high. So, you know, I -- I don't know that. I'm just -- you know, I'm -- I'm just --

JESUS HERRERA: Yeah.

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REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): -- throwing out hypotheticals. So, you know, it's certainly something that -- that we all want to look at is how do we get people to actually stop doing it and not just, you know, increase the penalty after they've already done it.

LIZA HERRERA: I --

JESUS HERRERA: Definitely we're gonna do some searching.

LIZA HERRERA: I'm sorry, I want to say something. I think also it's about for teenagers, we need more to teach them more like -- they need come more like to classes. We need to like -- that's why I -- I think if we increase this penalty, we could make the teenagers think twice when they are in the car and they have people in the car and -- and they, you know, they -- to make more responsible. I teach my daughter that when she make a mistake, she was responsible for -- for what she did. And -- and I think we should teach the teenagers like to -- make consideration with people in the car and people outside that they put in dangers.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): You know, I -- I -- I -- I certainly understand what you're saying and -- and, you know, I'm -- I'm certainly willing to help you in any way I can. Because obviously this is a -- a big problem in your area. And, you know, if there -- if there's anything other than what's in the Bill that you think needs to be added, I'm certainly willing to work with you on that, as well.

JESUS HERRERA: I appreciate that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you.

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REP. ROSARIO (128TH): If I -- if I may through the Chair --

REP. STRAFSTROM (129TH): Certainly.

REP. ROSARIO (128TH): That -- that's information that I -- I'll be more than glad to have my staff look up and provide to the Committee as a whole.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): All right. I appreciate that.

REP. CANDELARIA (95TH): If I may, Mr. Chairman. I -- I think one thing that -- that needs to be noted in -- in this change of the language is that when you look at evasion of responsibility in operating a -- a motor vehicle which -- talks about the illegal racing, right now it's \$75 dollars. So, what the Bill does is increase it to \$150 dollars. But not only that, it also mandates an eight-hour reckless aggressive driving. And under any subsequent situations, what it does, it raises that to \$300 dollars and also suspends the -- the individual's driver's license. So, there is some -- a little -- a lot more. So, you know, once you have to go through all those processes, you'll think twice, right. I think that -- that what we thought out in the language of the Bill is how do we deter it from happening again. And your first time, we -- we understand that -- that can happen because we talk about -- some of them may be even teenagers, young adults. But subsequent offenses, you see that as a stronger penalty in the sense that you have to go to class, plus if you don't go, we'll suspend your driver's license, as well.

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REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And -- and again, that -- that would -- that would hinge on whether or not a citation was issued --

REP. CANDELARIA (95TH): Right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): -- and whether or not the person is actually found guilty. This would be the penalty after that. So, you know, we -- we also want to make sure that those steps fall into line as well, and that people are cited -- you know, when they -- when they should be as opposed to being let off. You know, if you make the penalty too high, perhaps the police will not be issuing as many citations.

REP. CANDELARIA (95TH): That's right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): That's all something to -- to think about. And I -- I appreciate you coming in and talking about this. It's obviously an important issue. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Representative, I -- Representative, I appreciate you raising this issue, Representative Dubitsky, as well. Because I do think this is a two-part problem. One part is certainly the penalties and the like. But there is an enforcement mechanism to this as well. And -- and, you know, obviously as we discussed this morning with some other Bills, you know, there -- there's a holistic approach to things. And sometimes legislation would pass maybe a positive step in the right direction, but it might not solve all the issues.

And, you know, unfortunately this is one of those instances, I think, where this is a -- this is a very positive step forward. It's a step in the

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right direction. But we continue to see, especially in our cities, a lack of resources, you know. Our cities in the state have some of the highest property taxes and the highest property tax burdens anywhere, anywhere in the nation, but continue to -- because of their size and because of a lack of economic opportunity, continue to struggle with a lack of resources, be that in our schools and in our police departments.

I mean, I know in Bridgeport, for example and Representative Rosario, I'll give you a chance to comment, we don't have traffic enforcement after 5:00 o'clock p.m. -- after 4:00 o'clock p.m. in Bridgeport. They don't -- the -- the cops can't afford to do it. They respond to the calls, if they get a call. But there are no officers out there patrolling the streets looking for traffic violations, because even with 440 police officers on the force, there isn't the manpower. So, they're not out there issuing speeding tickets. They're not out there issuing tickets for folks rolling through stop signs. We don't have the manpower. And we have a mill rate of 55. Representative Rosario.

REP. ROSARIO (128TH): Sure. If I -- if I may add, and -- and I could speak on this -- on this issue twofold. One, obviously representing the city of Bridgeport, but I actually work for the city of Shelton, where this tragedy unfortunately took place. And same issues that are happening in Bridgeport are happening in -- in the cities and towns across the state. We don't have enough resources for traffic enforcement and -- and other issues, with that being said. So, my -- I -- I totally agree and it's a twofold problem.

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REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions or comments from the Committee? Representative Porter.

REP. PORTER (94TH): No questions. Just a comment. First and foremost, my heart goes out to -- to both of you, all of you. There's a solidarity that cannot be denied in this room right now. This space is -- it's -- it's big, but the love -- the loss, I cannot imagine, but I do feel your pain. And I'm so very sorry that you have to be here to testify on these grounds. But I applaud you for having intestinal fortitude to sit before this Committee and share your story and share your pain.

And I am 150 percent behind this Bill. And yes, we need to address it holistically. But you -- one bite at a time, one step at a time. And this is definitely a step in the right direction.

And I know your pretty girl is looking down and very proud of what you all are here today doin' on behalf of her and anyone else that may be, you know, susceptible to this -- this kind of accident. And it is about prevention, you know. It was tragic. But if we can do anything to stop another family in the state of Connecticut from experiencin' what you will have to experience for the rest of your life, because you're right, every single day is a struggle. And my prayer for you is that every day is gets a little easier. That's my prayer. And just know that my -- my prayers and thoughts are with you especially, for all of you, all of those that loved her, her family, her friends that I am praying for you all.

JESUS HERRERA: Thank you.

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Thank you for being here today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions or comments from the Committee? Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good afternoon. I just want to take this opportunity, again, also to thank you for your daughter's service to our country. Because obviously, she was doing something that she knew was giving up her time and dedication and probably never had a thought that this is the way that she would have lost her life. So, I thank her very much for what she's done for the country. I think -- I thank you and everyone who's here taking the time to advocate, turning this horrific experience in your life into something we hope will stop the next accident in that regard.

So, and I do want to point out and I think the Representatives have done a wonderful job in indicating this is not just an inner-city issue. They actually look to the rural -- rural areas to open -- open streets and no traffic and think that it's safe to do. It's just as tragic. I think people forget that driving is a privilege, it's not a right, and it's one they should be taking very highly.

So, when it's street racing or the other practices, stealing vehicles and then racing those vehicles, because they're the faster ones or your, you know, a -- a bigger, badder person because now it's a stolen vehicle, anything can cause the loss of a life. Someone innocently crossing the street, someone innocently coming out of their vehicle on

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the side of the rode, another vehicle coming who had the right of way. And then just the mere fact of losing control. Like this shouldn't even be an idea that enters into these peoples' minds to think of even racing or stealing someone's car and -- and having a chase, shouldn't even be.

So, I thank you for taking the opportunity to be here. I support the educational component. These people should be doing community service and speaking on panels in front of other kids, explaining what exactly happened that caused a tragedy in somebody else's life.

So, I fully support and, you know what, it's a step in the right direction, but I hope it's a step that we'll see all the way through and the Governor signing into law. So, you've got certainly my commitment, and it sounds like you've got many other people who are committed to this. So, I look forward to seeing this through with you.

JESUS HERRERA: Thank you very much. Thank you.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you madam. Or I could just move for a Consent Calendar to be opened. [laughter] Further questions or comments from the Committee? Seeing none, thank you guys for being here.

JESUS HERRERA: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank all of you.

JESUS HERRERA: Thank you so much.

LIZA HERRERA: Thank you so much.

JESUS HERRERA: It's okay.

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REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): All right. So, as I mentioned, we're gonna continue to go through the list. If there are folks as part of this group or other groups who still want to testify, you can. If you don't, when your name is called, just give me a little nod, and we can -- we can move along. And I think there's a couple of other groups that want to come up together as well on other Bills.

Next on my list, I have Marilyn Bergis. Marilyn Bergis? Okay. Sean Oppenheimer? Sean Oppenheimer is all good? Ernestine Holloway? Ernestine Holloway? Gone. Brittany Moore? Brittany Moore? She gone? Sheila Oppenheimer?

SEAN OPPENHEIMER: She's going to go with me.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. You guys want to come up? Oh, come on up.

SEAN OPPENHEIMER: All right. Do you wanna go?

SHEILA OPPENHEIMER: You go first.

SEAN OPPENHEIMER: I can go? All right. Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for being here today to listen to my testimony on this Bill. I don't think there are any more words that I could say that will -- that -- that will make any more of a point than what my friend's, Shalymar's parents, just said. But I do want to emphasize how much I support this Bill, because not only does this increase the penalties to make sure that offenders of these laws pay -- pay a price for what they did, it's not -- the penalties aren't always about preventing, it's -- it's about making sure that people don't do the crime again. But also, this Bill adds an education requirement. So, each offense, the offenders have to go through a

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reckless aggressive driving class to make sure that they can reflect on their actions. That will make sure that they're a safer driver. They'll return to the roads a safer driver. And it'll decrease the risks that what happened to our community, the communities in Bridgeport, West Haven, Aquadilla, Puerto Rico, where she was from and now lie -- lies in eternal rest, make sure that what happened to us doesn't happen to another community. That's -- that's why we're here. That's why we're supporting this Bill.

Shalymar was my junior prom date. That was a really fun night. Yeah, she -- she was an amazing friend. I can't emphasize how much her smile could brighten up anyone's day or just how she was always there for everyone. She was there for us, she was there for her family, she was there for her country. And we're hoping, as I'm -- we've heard a lot of support, all of you will be there for her in passing this Bill. Mom?

SHEILA OPPENHEIMER: I'd also like to add that there were two others, of course, who died as well, a 23-year-old woman named Briana Torres, pregnant with a baby girl. Her baby shower was the night before Briana died, and despite the best efforts of first responders and medical personnel, the baby died as well. Her name was Luna.

And again, this tragedy occurred in the context of illegal street racing. And somehow on the night of April 8th, the drivers of these two cars thought it was a good idea. And now we are left without precious Shalymar, Briana, and Luna. Thank you for your support. And thank you so much for your comments and feedback for the family.

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REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, both. Questions from the Committee? If not, I just want to thank you both for being with us. Thanks for your advocacy, and we're so sorry for your loss.

SEAN OPPENHEIMER: Thank you.

SHEILA OPPENHEIMER: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Inez Pegais. Maybe we can get somebody who's down there just to help move the mic. Okay, grab -- all right, there you go.

INEZ PEGAIS: My name is Inez Pegais. I represent a Hartford community group Greater House of African-American Alliance. We've been meeting for the last 25 years on pressing community issues. So, here we are. First, please excuse the remarks that they don't agree with any updated version of the Bill. Sometimes a community is the last to receive the latest version of whatever goes on in this building. Our group supports SB 880. I think that's the number, especially the collection of data such as the zip code of the defendant. Crimes in Hartford are -- crimes are perpetrated in Hartford by people who don't live in Hartford. We like the zip codes. Primary language of the defendant and the plea bargains offered the defendant or the person who they believe committed the crime.

We also support the pilot program, the suggested pilot program where individuals will have the option, I guess it will be an option, of representation at parole revocation hearings.

And finally, we noted that only two percent of the hearings held for modification of sentences are awarded, two percent, forcing any reasonable person to acknowledge that the current procedure is not

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REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): All right. Next up, hailing from the great city of Bridgeport, Albert Benejan. Come on up, my friend.

ALBERT BENEJAN: Hello everyone. My name is Albert Benejan. I'm one of the PTSO presidents from Bssick High School community leader from Bridgeport. I'm here to support Bill 738. Shalymar Herrera was my -- my niece. Imelissu [phonetic] is my sister. I'm sorry. We're going through a lot of things. And we need to have justice for only -- not only for my niece, Shalymar Herrera, for Briana, and the baby Luna.

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It's not fair that we have people on the street that are not responsible. My mother had two kids, me and my sister next to me. My sister had two kids. My nephew is here and my sister's gone -- my niece is gone. She served for the -- for the United States. She was -- I was very proud. The date of birthday, June 28, 2018, I went to the court to see one of the persons who was driving the car that was not responsible. That day was the first day I don't have my niece tell me, Happy Birthday, Uncle. I would never forget April 8, 2018 at 9:47 p.m. when my sister called me and told me my niece was gone. I said, where -- where she's gone? She said she have a car accident. She died. My mother had four grandkids, three boys and she was the -- the princess of the family. Now, she's gone. So, like I said before, I'm here to support and help to build Bill 738. And you know, this is my only sister I have, we all together, we are family, and we're here to work together. I told you in the beginning, and I hope everyone understand. Thank you so much for everything.

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REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Albert. And we certainly do understand. And I just want to publicly thank you, not just for your advocacy on this Bill, but your fight day in and day out to improve the lives of folks in the west end and the south end of Bridgeport, in particular, and -- and folks who often need a little bit of help and -- and need somebody to give them a hand. And you're the kind of guy who would give 'em the shirt off their back if they asked for it. So, I -- I appreciate you being here and spending the day with us.

ALBERT BENEJAN: Thank you for your time.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up is Romelo Goss. Okay. And I know we've got a whole group of folks who signed up. They're all gonna come up, so we're gonna give them a little -- a little leeway on the time and -- we just need you, if you guys could all just identify yourselves for the record quickly so that we've got that for the Clerk, that would be helpful.

VAUGHN THOMAS: All right. My name is Vaughn Thomas.

ROMELO GOSS: And my name is Romelo Goss. I'm from Bridgeport, CT. I'd like to thank you.

TIANA KRAUS: I'm Tiana Kraus.

ROMELO GOSS: I'd like to thank you for this time to -- you want me closer? All right. I'm in favor of HB 7389 because I feel we need to remove youth from adult prisons. I feel we are hurtin' them more than we're helping them.

Sittin' at the police station until the next morning to get my bond set, was already traumatizing. Being

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JULISSA TORRES: Good afternoon, legislatures. My name is Julissa Torres. I am here for the proposed Bill 7378. My daughter was Briana Torres. She was eight months pregnant. The day before the accident, we just celebrated her baby shower. On this given day, she called me, she told me she was on her way to me. I got this bad habit of looking at the time every time my kids leave my home. I looked at the time, it was 6:37. And I waited. All she asked me was, "Mommy, I want some potato salad." And I told her, "I got the water boiling." I waited. Next thing you know, everything -- a knock on the door, so I run to my door thinking it was my daughter and it was the cops saying that there was an accident, that I needed to go to the hospital. Letting you know, that I did go, sure. I sure went to the hospital. I called my oldest son to stay with the young ones. I basically ended up finding my daughter at the morgue.

She was -- she left a five-year-old behind. Where he asked me yesterday, after almost a year that she's been gone, "Mommy, grandma, if I have baby Luna in my right hand and I have mommy in my other hand, why Jesus don't hurry up and let them go, so they could come home?" He was just pronounced last week with PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder for being only five years old. Not only him, his little brother that's ten, which my husband passed away five years ago from a drunk driver, as well. And so, my ten-year-old is going through the same thing twice.

So, how can I -- how can I try to push this kids forward and tell them grow up, do the right thing, get your license, when half of the time I'm scared to drive myself. I pray to God every day for

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strength and for power. When I'm feeling down I call Liza. When she's feeling down, she calls me. She become my best friend. Every single day I don't sleep. I don't speak. Seeing my kids, her five-year-old that I have, he's in my custody now, how do I explain to him when that given time comes, how did his mother die. I'm not ready. I'm not ready. It hurts when a five-year-old tells you, my soul is broken. This little kid is so bright. He's only five years old and he's taking second grade classes. We push them. With my ten-year-old son -- my ten years old son becomes a role model for my five-year-old grandson. So, it's hard. Please take it into consideration with this Bill. We need this. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Ma'am, your -- your loss is unimaginable, both and your strength to be here and to testify, and as was said by a previous speaker, there are a lot of us who are parents and have our own kids. And I think, you know, we -- we all are -- there's certain nights we leave here and it's one of the hardest things about serving on this Committee that you just want to go home and hug your own kids. And because, you know, it's just such reminder of how precious life is.

But your strength to be up here, to be able to testify before us, to talk about your experience, and to -- to advocate for change, I think is -- is certainly an inspiration to all of us. I think, I -- rom the comments I've heard, if our rules allowed us to take a vote on this Bill right now [laughter] and vote it out, it would -- I'm not sure there would be a no vote [laughter], I highly doubt it. But I -- I again, I just want to -- want to express to you and -- and to everyone here today on

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behalf of the Committee how serious that we take this and how, you know, there's a reason we do these public hearings. There's a reason we sit here since 10:00 o'clock in the morning, and it's because they do make a difference. And your testimony does make a difference. And so, I wanna -- I wanna thank you again for -- for --

JULISSA TORRES: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): -- your strength and your advocacy. Further questions or comments? Thank you very much.

JULISSA TORRES: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Rosa Sanchez?

ROSA SANCHEZ: Uh-huh. I'm gonna try and get through this as quickly as possible. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm sorry. As a parent, I can't imagine losing my child. My daughter is 30 years old and having her second baby. I'm so sorry. So, I am co-workers with the Herreras, and my heart goes out to them. And I don't want to support Bill 7378 because I agree with everything that I've heard here today in terms of giving youth more and getting them involved in more. However, in this particular case, the youth was 19 years old, the husband of Briana who put them at risk with complete disregard. Walking around, driving, license is suspended. And I think this is the real reason why we all are here to try and make a difference. We're not talking spend 20 years in jail, but we are saying a more severe penalty needs to take place. And if we were going to compare to DUI, it should be held at the same standards, because that's reckless endangerment to everyone in the vehicle and pedestrians alike.

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I -- when I leave work, I want to go home not thinking that, you know, some irresponsible jerk out on the street decides, hey, I'm gonna race today and there goes everything. It's just so very important to make this happen. And I wanna thank you for giving us the opportunity to share that with you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the Committee? Thank you very much. Tondaloo Ivery? Yeah. This -- yeah, I know we have a couple folks sign up on the bottom. Anybody else from this group? Let's -- let's do it this way, why don't -- is there anybody else from this group, so we can get -- get you guys home, because I know it's been a long emotional day.

JESUS HERRERA: I'm gonna -- I'm gonna ask to excuse myself and what I want really, thank you very much for your service. It's been a long day. And you guys sit there listening to us. So, I really appreciate and -- and any support from you guys would be really appreciated. Both families appreciate it.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Absolutely. Thank you.

JESUS HERRERA: Thank you so much.

RAQUEL ACUNA: Good evening members of the Committee. My name is Raquel. I'm just going to echo a little bit. I'm here in support of the Bill 7378. I support this Bill -- this Bill, because I feel that anybody who has killed others in a car accident due to illegal racing and negligent homicide with a motor vehicle should pay the price. When you get into a vehicle and choose to race, you're not only putting yourself in danger but you're putting others in danger as well as who may

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be drivers around the road, pedestrians, and most importantly, the people in the car and yourself.

Shalymar's life was cut loose because of the mistake and poor judgment of someone else. The driver of the vehicle she was in, didn't take in consider of the other people he had in his car that day and raced, carefree, causing the horrific accident that took the life of Shalymar Herrera, as well as Briana and baby Luna. She was one of my best friends and had completed so much in such a short time, and she was a hero to our country who vouched to save and protect our nation in the Army.

Not only were the victims robbed from their lives and dreams, but they were robbed from their families, their friends, and other opportunities that they had to grow in life. Anyone that -- that would bring grief to others by taking away a family member due to illegal racing and -- and negligent homicide with a motor vehicle, should pay the price. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to express myself and as to why I agree with this Bill. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Just identify yourself for the record, so that we've -- we've got it.

AMEILA SANTOYO: Good afternoon. My name is Ameila Santoyo and I am standing here in support of the Bill 7378. Not only am I supporting this Bill because of the lives that were lost on April 8th, 2018, but because it is unfair to those who have to deal with the pain that comes after a traumatic event like this one. You never know what can happen or you never think this is going to happen to you or someone close to you until it actually happens. The

PUBLIC HEARING

aftermath is harder than you and it doesn't get easier. You only have to hope and have -- you only have to hope and have faith things get better. Grief is something many of us have been dealing with since April of 2018. The passing of this Bill should be implemented and increased in getting higher censuses, having your license suspended or taken for a long period of time. You should not have to be afraid of getting in the car with someone else. You shouldn't be having thoughts whether your life will end or not because of the irresponsibility's others decide to make. People make decisions without the care of others but theirselves. They only think of the moment.

The highest level of participation is males around the ages of 15 to 23 years -- 23 years old. Each year, there has been approximately 37,000 motor vehicle accidents in the US. During 1998 until 2001, there has been at least 399 fatalities which over the years has been going up. No one should be out on the streets living life as if they didn't do any harm. We should come together so they can be responsible for what these drivers do. Not only that but it's sad having to go to court every month and seeing the people that did this with no remorse.

Like we said, it's like they're -- they're out there living their lives and they probably suffer, but we're the ones suffering more because Shalymar is not here. I grew up with her since I was a little girl. And although I didn't know Briana, she -- what I've heard, she's amazing. She left a little boy. Her baby was pronounced deceased at that time, too. Every time I go over to Liza's house, you know, it's sad having to go to sleep over at your friend's house and your friend is not there. And

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what hits me the most is when I see her little brother, he's always like desperate because he doesn't know what to do. He always comes to me and whenever I'm around, he just wants me to play with him because he has nobody else to play with. They all hurt in silence. We all hurt in silence.

And they're still out there living their lives, not -- with like no care in the world. When -- it's sad. And we just want the investigation to be over with. We want the trial to start. We're tired of going to court, having everything pushed back and pushed back and pushed back. Nothing ends.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. You girls -- you girls are remarkable for coming up here, for sitting here, and -- and for being so strong in your testimony. Questions, comments? Thank you both. Anybody else who hasn't had a chance to testify that wants to? If not, we -- we wish -- we wish you absolutely all the best. And I -- I assure you we are going to take this very seriously. And -- and I anticipate that this Bill will move out of this Committee in the next couple weeks. So, thank -- thank you all very much.

Okay. I know we have a couple of other folks who are still here who want to testify. I'm going to call them. And then, we'll see if there's anybody I missed. Noemi Soto. Just make sure you hit your microphone button there and turn that on.

NOEMI SOTO: Hello. Okay.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Got it.

NOEMI SOTO: So, I came here -- my allergies are all wacky right now. But I came here in support of SB -- oh, I'm sorry, thank you, SB 880, 996, 1008,

SB 1098

Good Evening CT Legislators and Committee,

My name is Tashira Suarez Acevedo and I am writing this letter because I am in support of HB #7378 about Illegal Racing and Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle.

I support this bill because I feel like the consequences for act of illegal racing need to be INCREASED in our streets. I do not find it fair for an innocent person to have their life taken away by someone else's poor judgement of decision.

Shalymar Herrera was an amazing human being and was robbed from all her dreams and goals that she had set for herself by the driver's careless decision to illegally race.

We CAN'T allow for innocent lives to keep being taken away for the cause of illegal racing and reckless driving. We may not be able to avoid it, but we are able to increase our laws and the penalties for the acts of it.

Thank you for allowing me to express how I feel towards this bill (HB 7378) in reference to Illegal Racing and Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle and as to why you should consider approving it.

Good Evening CT Legislators and Committee,

My name is Mildred Alvarez and I am writing this letter because I am in support of the HB #7378 in reference to Illegal Racing and Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle.

I am Shalymar Herrera's aunt, whom was one of the victims in a car accident due to illegal racing. She was a well-educated, responsible, and intelligent young woman loved by many. She had a bright future ahead of herself which she will no longer be able to accomplish due to someone else's irresponsible decision.

This tragedy has left her friends, and family grieving, but most importantly she has been robbed from her younger brother, who she was a role model and best friend. I myself am a single mom to a 15-year-old who has also been affected by this tragedy and is also in support of this bill.

By approving HB #7378 it will bring a security and knowledge to our young people about the consequences of illegal racing.

Thank you for your time and for allowing to express my thoughts as to why I support HB #7378 and why you should consider APPROVING IT.

7378

Blanchard, Deborah

From: Johnny Bairaktaris <jlb911@optonline.net>
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2019 9:48 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Written testimony for why I think the bill for punishment for speed racers should commence

HB 7378

3-24-19

Johnny Bairaktaris

This bill needs to pass because Shalymar along with her friend were taken too early. I do not tolerate speed racers. I am a former Police Explorer of the Fairfield CT Police Department. I also want to be a Police Officer and serve my community and my country. To make sure that laws like this would be followed and to make sure they are enforced and that those who don't take the law seriously I would make sure they get the punishment that they deserve which in my personal opinion should be life in prison along with a fine. This is not a joke speed racing doesn't make you cool and for those of you who think that it is guess again because it's not. For those of you who just do it to impress a girl or for whatever reason knock it off. Shalymar's friend for example for what he did he should be facing a lot of time in prison so that what he did sinks in his head that he would never forget what he did. He got what he deserved but he killed my friend Shalymar along with her friend who was pregnant with a baby. Shalymar's friend was a mother to a baby that wasn't born yet and that man killed them including Shalymar by doing something stupid trying to impress them. They did not deserve to die if anything the driver should be dead not my friend Shalymar and her friend. The day I heard of the accident my friend Sean Oppenheimer sent me a link and I started to burst into tears and started to make a fist because I didn't want to believe it but it happened. Shalymar was a private in the United States Army serving this great nation protecting and fighting for this great nation and protecting and defending the constitution of the United States. Every year people are killed because of stupid speed racers. I do not tolerate this one bit. I will not rest until these people who speed race pay for their mistakes and get the time in prison that they deserve. This needs to be a big huge law that no one can break and if you do you pay the price. It doesn't matter if that's their kid who gets in trouble and they are sentenced for a long time in prison. They need to see that they are going to pay the ultimate price. Speed racing needs to end. If you can all hear me and see that this is absolutely why this law needs to be passed then you know that I am being serious. We need to save lives we need to make a difference we need to pass this law and honor Shalymar and her friend to show them this law will be passed and we will name this law after them to show them that we have their backs. I will not back down I am a true supporter and defender and I will defend this law and I will support and defend the Herrera family. Together again we can all make a difference together we can win the fight to make sure this new law commences.

Johnny Bairaktaris

Westport CT

Testimony

Sent from my iPhone

HB 7378

Mr. Chairman and members of the judiciary committee,

On April 8, after a seemingly fun night at Shelton's SportsCenter, we lost soldier PFC Shalymar Herrera, a mother Brianna Torres-Carter, and her unborn child, Luna Rose. We often ask ourselves what could I have done? I saw her final snapchats the next morning and I listened to her yell to the driver "don't get hit!" I ask myself if I saw those sooner - would things be different? We often believe our actions could have changed time and stopped this day from happening - however, it is often too late.

Despite legislature penalizing operators for the death of another person, a lost human life cannot be equated to a mere \$2500. Street racing is foremost illegal, reckless, and dangerous. It is a deadly game that puts the driver and innocent lives at risk of death or serious injury. Many are now recognizing that more must be done which is why proposed bill #6720 will prevent unnecessary deaths such as my closest friend Shaly, Brianna, and Luna.

A lack of federal, legislative, and educational efforts to combat illegal street racing will cost more lives if nothing is done to increase penalties which will deter many to street race and spread awareness through educational efforts. Although Connecticut may not have the highest number of total fatalities due to speed-related crashes, we have the opportunity to be leaders in setting a strict tone for illegal street racing to prevent more deaths.

To address this problem, an increase in penalties for negligent homicide and first offense of illegal racing, as well as a 15-hour mandatory reckless driving class, would provide the necessary preemptive steps to combating illegal street racing. This problem will never fully go away, but why not make it safer and eliminate the possibility of another innocent life being taken.

In this day and age, educating children and adults is the most important thing we can do for future generations. Children grow up to become members of society, therefore it is pertinent that a body is working towards a safe and prosperous future for communities. There are many ways in which families, political and community leaders can help support the safety of motor operators and passengers - but first, we must educate and strengthen our laws so that together, we can help keep this tragedy from happening to other families in the future.

Thank you.

April Bowen testimony for proposed bill #6720

University of New Haven | B.S. Mechanical Engineering
(203) 231-5077 | abowe5@unh.newhaven.edu

Good Evening CT Legislators and Committee,

My name is Marilyn Burgos, I am from Bridgeport CT and I'm writing this letter because I SUPPORT HB#7378.

As a mother, watching your child grief over the loss of a best friend is heart breaking, and I cant imagine what it would feel like to lose one, but I agree that if I was in that position I would fight as much as I can to make sure that the penalties are increased for anyone that causes a loss over Illegal Racing and Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle.

When a child enters a vehicle, or when anyone enters a vehicle, they put their trust on the driver to make the right choice and keep them safe. In Shalymar's case, she put her trust in the driver to drive safely and get her to her next destination unharmed, and not only did the driver betrayed her trust by simply thinking it would've been a good idea to race at such speed, but in the acts of it he took her life and two others away. I am a mother, and when you loose as child, nothing is ever the same. A part of you dies the moment as well when your child dies. It never gets easy, you just get used to the pain, and no mother should have to BURY their child at such a young age. Our kids are supposed to bury us, not us say goodbye to them.

Today as a mother I stand with everyone to SUPPORT HB #7378.

Shalymar who joined the ARMY to protect OUR country and EVERY SINGLE one of us deserves this bill to be passed. She had her whole life ahead of her, and it is not fair that the ones responsible for her death, aren't being held accountable for their actions.

Thank you once again, for allowing me to share my thoughts as a mother, and as to why you should consider APPROVING HB#7378.



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE JUAN CANDELARIA
NINETY-FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

CAPITOL: 860-240-8585
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267
FAX: 860-240-0206
E-MAIL: Juan.Candelaria@cga.ct.gov

DEPUTY SPEAKER

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE

Judiciary Committee
March 25, 2019

Testimony in Support of H.B. No. 7378
An Act Concerning Negligent Homicide with a
Motor Vehicle and Illegal Racing

Good afternoon, Chairmen Rep. Stafstrom and Sen. Winfield, distinguished ranking members and members of the Judiciary Committee, I am here to testify in favor of H.B. No. 7378, An Act Concerning Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle and Illegal Racing.

This bill would provide an increase in the current penalties on offenders. Negligent homicide with a motor vehicle occurs more often than it should and currently the penalties in our general statutes do not adequately represent the gravity of losses sustained due to these actions.

Currently students are instructed in safe driving habits and skills in driving school as well as the highway transportation system; analysis of crashes; roadway designs and markings; risk management techniques; and Connecticut's 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.

According to Sec. 14-224(c) "No person shall operate a motor vehicle upon any public highway for a wager or for any race or for the purpose of making a speed record"

This makes Connecticut law one of the most permissive with respect to criminal penalties regarding negligent death regarding a motor vehicle and illegal racing.

According to the state of Connecticut Penal Code updated and revised as of March 2nd 2018, as to criminally negligent homicide with the use of a motor vehicle (14-222a) a sentence of less than six months imprisonment and a fine of two-thousand five hundred dollars is the current maximum sentence.

Among our streets and our highways there has been a long-standing issue of injury and death due to reckless driving from illegal racing, and negligence from adhering to the safe driving laws.

Drivers receive an education on the proper rules and regulations of the road and administration of the consequences, but although in a lot of instances people are injured or lose their lives by supposedly fully trained drivers with no adequate consequence.

This bill raises these penalties, not only as a mean of deterrence, but to provide the families with a sense of closure, justice and safety.

I would like to thank this committee for its consideration and time. Please contact me if you would like more information or have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Juan Candelaria".

Juan Candelaria
State Representative

Blanchard, Deborah

From: anna gotay <gotayanna@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 6:36 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: HB 6720 justice for shalymar

HB 7378

Sent from my iPhone

My name is Ana Gotay I have live in Connecticut All my life and I feel as a mom and a woman their should be a law on you choose to drive drunk or reckless an take other lives you should be punish. This young ladies lives was taken from them and the families. A baby that was coming into the world had her baby shower and had a name was taken as well. This baby felt pain just like us. Their should be a law.

7378

Speech IV

Good morning Connecticut Legislators,

My name is Dante Kevon Guess and I am here to support Bill 6720. If this bill gets passed, it will bring justice and peace to my friend, Shalymar, who was 18 years old at the time of her passing. Not only that it will bring justice and peace to all of the families that lost loved ones to illegal car racing.

Losing my friend, Shalymar, broke something inside of me, that I can't explain. Shalymar was an angel, and still is. To lose someone, who impacted me and my life so much. She was like a guardian angel. She helped me, find myself and to be soon, my career. She opened my eyes and introduced me to the Air Force. At the time, she was very passionate about the Air Force and wanted me to join. She never gave up on that dream. Even when she told me I should join, I did not consider going to the Air Force, but over-time, her voice ~~was~~ was taking over my thought, remembering her say, "just do it."

HB 7378**Peterson, Bobbye**

From: Henry,Sonia <Sonia.Henry@gartner.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2019 11:06 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: RE: Bill# HB6720 INCREASING THE PENALTIES FOR NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE WITH A MOTOR VEHICLE

Hello, I was given an incorrect email address but I'm hoping you will still take my important email into consideration.

From: Henry,Sonia
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 9:15 AM
To: 'judtestimony@cga.gov' <judtestimony@cga.gov>
Subject: Bill# HB6720 INCREASING THE PENALTIES FOR NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE WITH A MOTOR VEHICLE
Importance: High

Good morning,

I am writing to you regarding increasing the penalties for negligent homicide with a motor vehicle.

My name is Sonia Henry, I am Felipe Peter Soto's Mother, he's lovingly known as Petey. As a Mother, I need to ensure I do everything I can within my power to accomplish my goal in receiving Justice. Whenever my son's killer went to court, I went, never missing one of his court dates. Had I known or have been made aware regarding today's hearing for increasing the penalties for negligent homicide with a motor vehicle I would have certainly attended. Should you have a distribution list, I would like to be included on your list.

My son's murderer, David Henshaw received only 3 years (which, I had to fight very hard for) as he drove at 140 mph on a 25 mph street and his recklessness, his disregard for the law and especially a human life, cost my son that of his, my grandchildren their father, his siblings a brother, and his father and I, our son. This was a heinous and senseless murder! My son was dismembered, his body cut completely in half, not only was he decapitated but the entire back of his head had to be sewn together in order for my family to view him privately, his body parts wrapped in blankets. He was disemboweled on the streets of Bridgeport. A nurse who ran to help my son found his foot first, his head and upper torso by a tree and his lower half by another. I could not touch his hand or hug my son I was specifically told in a loud voice, DO NOT TOUCH HIM. David Henshaw not only murdered my son but he took away my right to touch my son one last time... (One that most people get).

When I think of Justice and all that I had to do to fight for Justice has been extremely frustrating. For almost 3 years now I have been disappointed, disgusted and appalled with the way my son's case has been handled and the disregard of my treatment. I believe officials have become Immune, Accustom and Desensitized to the victims and their families as they deal with it on a daily basis. My experience regarding empathy has been almost nonexistent. Thus far, I feel as if the City of Bridgeport has been a disservice. I have never felt so insulted, discouraged and devastated in all my life.

Why have street signs, why have speed limits, why have laws if people will continue to disobey them. It makes me wonder if anyone cares about the law, if anyone cares about a human life? Henshaw drove 140mph on a 25mph street as if it meant NOTHING to him, dismembering and decapitating my son's body, meant absolutely nothing! What you allow is what will continue... People will not respect the law and think they are above it and can do anything they want all while getting away with Murder! Where are my son's rights? I am overwhelmed with grief and the damage it can do to your mind and body, it has wreaked havoc on our entire family.

My son was Felipe Peter Soto, only (and now forever 31), you may not have known him, but we all do. He was hardworking, loving, hysterically funny, intelligent, empathetic, a great listener, handsome, caring and had the most contagious smile. But most importantly he was a son, brother, father, nephew, cousin and friend to countless people. He always spoke highly of me and made it known just how much he loved me as well as his children. His presence was so entertaining he could engage anyone in conversation.

We love him, we miss him, we cry for him, we mourn him with every fiber of our being. Both Petey and his children Nicholas and Elissa who were 5 and 4 years old, were robbed of precious time with their father, he can no longer nurture, educate, play or hold his children. He cannot take pictures of their first day of school, attend a class field trip, take his daughter to a father/daughter dance, plan a family vacation, attend their graduation, teach them how to drive, walk his daughter down the aisle, give fatherly advice, or hold his future grandchildren. HE was an amazing young man with a beautiful heart, a passion for life and a promising future until David Henshaw abruptly ended it. David Henshaw has been taking advantage of the system for almost 3 years. He is a fortunate man because he continues to live, sleep, eat, celebrate birthdays and holidays while my son is mere ashes in a box. I am terrified of holidays as they are a harsh reminder he's no longer here. I'll never see my son grow old, celebrate his birthdays, hug him, kiss him, talk or ever see him again. I feel as if I die a little every day. My chest is tight, my heart hurts terribly, it's an excruciating pain. I have no choice but to talk to his picture.

My son's death certificate lists his death as an accident, I couldn't disagree more ~ driving 40 – 45 on a 25 mph street might be considered an accident, but driving 140mph on a 25mph street for 5 blocks is Murder! In the words of Chief AJ Perez "Worst scene he's witnessed in his 34 years of service. Horrific scene, it looked like a bomb had hit that car". I hope, pray and beg that you please increase the penalties for negligent homicide with a motor vehicle. I only ask that you please let us know there is a justice system that takes these matters seriously.

I thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Sonia Henry
317 Sylvan Knoll Road
Stamford, CT 06902
Mobile: 203 550 4039
Work: 203 316 3507
Personal Email: storres1108@gmail.com
Work Email: sonia.henry@gartner.com

<https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Man-gets-3-years-in-horrific-crash-that-killed-13628086.php>

Sonia Henry | Analyst, Corporate Pricing | Gartner | 56 Top Gallant Road | Stamford, CT 06904-2212
Office: +1 203 316 3507 | sonia.henry@gartner.com | www.gartner.com

If you are not the intended recipient or have received this message in error, please notify the sender and permanently delete this message and any attachments.

My name is Jelian Herrera and I'm here to support Bill 6720. 7378

Last year on April 8th I lost my only sister Shalymar Herrera. I know she is in heaven now and that some^{day} we will all be together again. But right now I miss her so much and every single day I wish I could have her back so we could do things and hangout together again.

My sister Shalymar was my best friend~~ship~~. We did everything together. We laugh, played games, went skating, played sports, and most of all she was always right by my side whenever I needed help the most. She help me with my homework, listen to my problem, and always did what ever she can to make me smile. She always made my birthday special and when we did things together as a family it was like having my best friend along with me in the back seat of the car.

One time when my dad, sister, and I went hiking my sister would always make little holes in the ground just in case if I got lose I could follow them to were my sister and my dad was.

Losing my sister has been the hardest thing that has ever happened to me. Sometimes it is hard to concentrate in school, because I am thinking of my sister and all of the memories I had with her. I am sad when I see my mom crying and my dad suffering too.

I love my family and I know that together we are getting through this as best as we can, with a lot of help and support of many people. 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 there siblings for being in a reckless driving accident.

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

HB 7378

My name is Liza Herrera, I am here with my husband Jesus Herrera to support Bill #6720. Our inspiration is our beloved daughter PFC Shalymar Herrera, who on April 8, was tragically killed in a car accident in Shelton. The driver of the car in which she was a passenger, impulsively decided to street race with another driver on River Road in Shelton, CT. As was discovered in the course of the investigation, both drivers were found to have exceeded 80 mph when the accident happened, (The speed limit in River Road ranges from 35 to 45 mph). The crash not only took the life of our precious daughter; but it also took the lives of other passengers including Briana Torres and her unborn baby Luna, who was due to be born in a month, and had sufficient physical development to be born had she too not been mangled and killed as a result of the accident. This racing incident also caused serious injuries to innocent passengers of a third car, which just happened to be passing through on that road.

We can't begin to express the depth of our grief for the loss of our 18 year old daughter, who was a loving sibling and best friend to her brother, Our 11 year old son Jelian. Shalymar was everything to us, she was the most perfect daughter we could ever ask for, and our lives will never be the same without her. She had a promising and exciting future ahead of her. She had finished Army training, and brought home 2 Army achievements awards including a Medal, and was about to attend The University of Connecticut in Stamford to fulfill her dreams of becoming a Veterinarian to reflect her love of animals. Shalymar's hopes and dreams were all about making a positive difference in the lives of others. But all of that was taken away suddenly and brutally, because of someone's careless decision to get a cheap thrill from street racing.

I know that every one of you Legislators are grateful for our soldiers. Well our Shalymar was a proud soldier in the United States Army, who was willing to put her life on the line to protect your freedom and mine. Never would she have guessed that her life would be snuffed out as a result of a senseless act of street racing.

Illegal street racing in Connecticut is a problem that has not been properly addressed. Currently as the law stands:

Sec. 14-222a. Negligent Homicide-Motor Vehicle- The actual penalties are not more than one thousand dollars or imprisonment not more than six months or both.

Sec.14-224 Illegal Racing on Highway- Fined not less than seventy-five dollars or more than six hundred dollars or be imprisoned not more than one year or be both fined and imprisoned, and for any subsequent offense shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars or more than one thousand dollars or more than one thousand dollars or be imprisoned not more than one year or be both fined and imprisoned. The court may order such motor vehicle to be impounded for not more than thirty days.

I am very grateful to have this opportunity to at least start this process of making changes to the existing law regarding penalties for illegal street racing and negligent homicide with a motor

vehicle. However, ideally, going forward, I would like to see these penalties increase even more, so they will have even greater power to deter would-be street racers before they even set foot into their car, based on a rush of adrenaline and the promise of a momentary thrill that could take human lives.

We kindly thank you for your consideration and your time. The passing of this bill is extremely important to us. Please help us to lower the likelihood of this happening to other families. We are trying to piece our family back together again, but it will NEVER be the same. You have the power to help us take this small step in making a positive change. Please pass Bill 6720.

Support Connecticut General Assembly's Prop..

437 supporters



Support Connecticut General Assembly's Proposed Bill to Increase Illegal Racing Penalti

437 have signed. Let's get to 500!

[Faint, illegible text]



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS AWARDED

THE ARMY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

TO

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS SHALYMAR HERRERA-VARGAS
399th COMBAT SUPPORT HOSPITAL

FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE AS MEDICAL SUPPLY SPECIALIST TO THE 399 COMBAT SUPPORT HOSPITAL
21 JUNE 2017 THROUGH 8 APRIL 2018. PFC HERRERA-VARGAS' EXEMPLARY DUTY PERFORMANCE
SINCE ASSIGNMENT HAS GREATLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE UNITS IMPROVED READINESS AND THE
MISSION SUCCESS DURING BRIDGE CSTX 78-18-03 FROM 11-31 MARCH 2018. PFC HERRERA-VARGAS'
POSITIVE ATTITUDE, DEDICATION TO TRAINING, AND SELFLESS SERVICE REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT
UPON HERSELF, THE 399TH COMBAT SUPPORT HOSPITAL, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

21 JUNE 2017 TO 8 APRIL 2018

GIVEN THIS
13th DAY OF APRIL 2018



Permanent Order # 18-103-001
Commander, 399th CSH
Devens, MA 01434

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bryan V. Stevens".

BRYAN V. STEVENS
LTC, SP, USAR
Commanding



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

AWARDED TO

PRIVATE SHALYMAR E. HERRERAVARGAS

FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AS A SQUAD LEADER FOR THE 68J, MEDICAL LOGISTICS SPECIALIST COURSE, CLASS 20-18. PV2 HERRERAVARGAS' EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE AND COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IS IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT UPON HERSELF, THE 264th MEDICAL BATTALION AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

14 FEBRUARY 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SC Lester', written over a horizontal line.

SEAN C. LESTER
LTC, MS
Commanding

Good Morning Legislators,

7378

It is a pleasure and honor to come before you today. My name is Liza Herrera. I am here to support bill 6720. I lost my daughter on April 8 2018, two hours after my son and I have spent the entire morning with her. She was everything to us. She had an amazing, humble, brave heart. Words can not describe the impact she put on this very earth. Shalymar passed away in a horrific car accident due to negligent street racing. The crash not only took the life of our daughter, it took the life of other passengers. That included Brianna Torres and her unborn daughter Luna who was due to be in a month.

I often think, if only the laws had been stricter with regard to street racing, the drivers of the two cars involved might have thought twice before they decided to race without regard to their lives, the passengers or passerby that day. My Daughter was a soldier of the United States Army who was willing to put her life on the line to protect your freedom and mine. She was preparing to go to college to becoming a veterinarian. Shalymar hopes and dreams were all about making a positive difference in the life of others. I will NEVER see my daughter grow to be an amazing woman, I can never listen to her voice again, and I will never see her care for my son again the way that she used to. We wanted nothing more than to see her prosper.

While nothing will ever bring back our daughter, we have decided to turn our devastating tragedy into something positive for others. To help prevent this tragedy from happening to other families, we want to see this bill passed because it will increase the penalties for those who commit crimes like the one that killed our daughter.

The passing of this bill is extremely Important to us. We can't make this positive change in Connecticut's laws happens without your help. So I now

ask that you please help us to lower the likely hood of this happening to other families. We kindly thank you for your time and consideration.

HB 7378

Proposed Bill #6720

7378

Statement by TondaLoa Ivery

I thank God for the opportunity to speak before you this morning. My name is TondaLoa Ivery, we have obviously never met but I believe it was meant for us to meet one another today and I am grateful. I am a disabled veteran that served in the United States Army on active duty from November of 1985 through March of 1993. I went on to serve in the United States Army Reserve for an additional 11 years after that. The military family is unique, we share a common bond, distinct lifestyle and we are taught in the first 8 weeks of training the importance of our job, but more importantly our connection with one another as fellow soldiers. We understand that the people we serve with know many of things we go through and they have the potential to help us survive in life threatening situations. I didn't have the opportunity to serve during the same time that Private First Class Shalymar Herrera served but I stand before you this morning and in the presence of everyone here to let her know that I got your SIX PFC Herrera! (I got your back)

I had the pleasure this weekend of speaking to one of my childhood friends, and we spoke in depth about life choices. I want to let you know this morning that in my heart I feel that this is the underlining theme to what this moment is about people made choices. We recognize many of the choices PFC Herrera made about her young life, but we also must recognize that on April 8th, 2018 two young men also made a choice that would affect the lives of many.

One of the important lessons about the choices we make are the consequences of those choices. When we look at the Connecticut Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle law, we find that in most cases conviction carries up to six months in jail and or a maximum \$1,00.00 fine. Interesting to me in Connecticut negligence is generally a person acts with negligence by failing to use the care that a reasonable person would under like circumstances. The definition even goes so far as to suggest that a person who fails to wear corrective lenses, would ordinarily fall in this category.

This leaves us perplexed, we cannot imagine that someone who failed to wear corrective lenses, and someone who chooses to race a motor vehicle with another motor vehicle and causes the death of passengers in that vehicle could both be considered negligent and receive the same sentence.

Here we are back to the place of choices, we believe that as parents, and family members the one thing that persuades the majority of the people against breaking the law, is the consequences of the act, the penalties that can change your life forever, but in this case the

penalties are so remarkably low, I can't see where the penalty carries the weight to alter the behavior. It is within your power today to make the choice to be a part of the change that would truly hold people accountable for their actions. Hear us today and support HB #6720.

Thank you

TondaLoa Ivery

Distinguished members of the committee:

I am writing in support of HB7378. I think that this important legislation is a small step towards justice for those killed by motor vehicles, including in illegal racing. I also hope that the passage of the legislation will not include any exemption for law enforcement from due process regarding any instances where officers may have used excessive force in high speed chases. High speed chases have resulted in the deaths of at least 17 people this year that have resulted in no investigations.

Thank-you,

Dr. Tina M. Manus, PhD
Greater Bridgeport NAACP Education Committee Chairwoman
Friends of Goody Bassett, PAC

Connecticut State Legislators; Honorable Chairpersons of the Committee,

It is my honor and privilege to come before you today to show support for the proposed bill 6720 which would increase the penalty for negligent homicide with a motor vehicle and illegal racing.

My name is Dr. Raeleen D'Agostino Mautner. I am from Wallingford CT. I hold a research PhD in psychology and after many years of teaching in the universities I began to work directly on research studies at Yale, and now presently coordinate a large research study at the CT VA Healthcare system to benefit our veterans. It is in this capacity that I came to know Liza Herrera, mother of Shalymar and Jelian Herrera and wife of Jesus. I now feel honored to know them all, as I observe their tremendous courage and good will through the most traumatic experience anyone could ever have to face—the loss of their precious daughter and sister, Shalymar Herrera.

I have known Liza for approximately 5 years. Like everyone else who knows her—I was always taken by the infectiousness of her joyful smile. She was and is—a loving mother, a devoted wife, and a hard and honest worker.

For the last year, that characteristic smile I used to see once upon a time--has given way to frequent tears that reflect the broken heart of a mother who lost her child; her only daughter, her flesh and blood.

The dictionary defines the word "negligent" as "failing to take proper care of something". Negligent homicide, then, would imply failing to take the proper care to safeguard someone else's life. There is not one of us in this room who would even think of putting another human being's life at risk. Most people don't. Most street racers don't think about it ahead of time either. And that is part of the problem.

From the sparse data we have on this subject, drag racing is usually spontaneous, driven by the thrill of an adrenaline rush, predominately carried out by young males who are between the ages of 16 and 25, who typically perform other risky and delinquent behaviors as well.

While there is no simple or one-size fits all solution to this ever growing and widespread problem, making a punishment strong enough to serve as a deterrent is at least a start. It will hopefully FORCE would-be racers to think about the very real consequences that would put a damper on their tendency to want to go through with a street race. Harsh consequences that can affect racers personally and in an adverse way, even if the thought of their own mortality isn't a tangible enough image ---may make a positive impact. In Rialto California, for example, a few years back, teens meticulously souped-up cars were confiscated and crushed, in an attempt to crackdown on illegal street racing in Southern California. That was indeed a strong enough punishment to have some effect.

Those who lose their lives as a result of street racing are not limited to the racers and their passengers, but often they are people like you and me who don't even personally know someone who drag races.

Some examples include:

*A North Carolina English professor and her 2-year-old daughter, whose car was slammed into by a street racer.

- A Florida grandmother innocently walking down the street and run down by street racers.
- In north Milwaukee a 60-year-old man riding his bicycle to work was struck and killed by a 13-year-old girl drag racing in a stolen car,
- 33 year old Cynthia Younker, of Greenville, Mich., killed by a drag racer who was driving up to 120 mph when he crashed into Younker's motorcycle.

The list goes on.

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 includes parents, teachers, doctors and religious leaders who are in a position to help disseminate information about the consequences and risks associated with drag racing.

The Herrera family is turning their pain into positivity by striving to make improvements in a law that is currently surprisingly lenient. I implore you to help them to make an important difference in the safety of our communities by passing bill# 6720.

Thank you very much for your time.

7378

Blanchard, Deborah

From: Isaac McBride <mcbridei@ymail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2019 6:31 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: HB 6720 7378

HB 7378

To the Connecticut Legislators ,
I want to thank you for listening to my written Testimony for the case TH 6720.
My name is Isaac L.McBride Jr.
71 Hourigan Dr. Meriden CT.

I want start by saying on April 9th 2018 , I came into work and then heard from my a friend that Shalymar was killed in a car accident the night before on April 8th 2018 . I was completely devastated on heading this, I couldn't believe it . This Is why the Friday before this happened Shalymar mom and two other coworkers and myself were having lunch this we would all do at least two to three times a week . We would all talk about Shalymar, achievements , her mom told us that she and Shalymar would be coming in on next Monday so I could talk with her about wanting to become a Paratrooper . I'm a retired 82nd Airborne Paratrooper .

That would never happen, she was killed in a car accident that could have been avoided, Shalymar and her friend Briana who at time was 8 months pregnant all died We all learn that they died because of car racing . I'm ask that this Legislative Committee please make this AmendMent HB 6720 into Law . This is not only for Shalymar any Brian's and her unborn child but it for all of us in Connecticut .

Thank you for time,
Isaac L. McBride Jr.

Peterson, Bobbye

From: Sean J. Oppenheimer <seanjoppenheimer@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 9:22 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Testimony for HB 6720 7378 HB 7378

My name is Sean Oppenheimer and I am from Fairfield. Mr. Chairman, members of the judiciary committee, thank you for hearing my testimony on House Bill Six Seven Two Zero. I am here to testify in favor of 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 and junior prom date Private First Class Shalymar Herrera.

I cannot emphasize enough how amazing of a friend she was or how her smile could brighten up anyone's day. We met when we were both fourteen because we were in the same Civil Air Patrol squadron. She had just completed Army training and was

about to join me as a student at UConn Stamford to pursue her dream of becoming a veterinarian, but was tragically taken from us on April Eighth, Two Thousand And Eighteen. This tragedy devastated entire communities of people in Bridgeport, West Haven, and Aguadilla, Puerto Rico where she was born and now lies in eternal rest. Our lives, especially the lives of her family, will never be the same without her.

While all horrific car crashes like this one can never be completely prevented, House Bill Six Seven Two Zero takes a very important step in reducing the chances that this tragedy will happen to another family or community in Connecticut in the future. Not only does House Bill Six Seven Two Zero increase the penalties of negligent homicide with a motor vehicle and illegal racing to ensure that offenders of these laws suffer just

consequences, but it also mandates that offenders of illegal racing laws have to complete fifteen hours of a reckless aggressive driving class for each offense of these laws. This requirement will allow for offenders of these laws to learn about the dangers of their actions and they will return to the roads as safer drivers, greatly reducing the risk of the tragedy that happened to our community from happening again.

House Bill Six Seven Two Zero has a sizeable amount of support, an online petition was circulated to gauge the level of support we have, and we received well over four hundred signatures. When voting on this bill, please vote on it as if this were your child or loved one in a crash like this one, because it could be. What one driver does on the road affects not only themselves, but also their passengers, all the other drivers and

passengers on the road around them, as well as their families, relatives, and friends. Thank you for listening to my testimony about House Bill Six Seven Two Zero, and I implore this committee to pass this bill to increase the safety of Connecticut's roads in loving memory of Private First Class Shalymar Herrera, Brianna Torres, Luna, and Representative Ezequiel Santiago.

Peterson, Bobbye

From: Sheila Oppenheimer <oppen@optonline.net>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 2:30 PM
To: JudTestimony **HB 7378**
Subject: Testimony for HB 6720

Madame Chair, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sheila Oppenheimer of Fairfield, Connecticut. I appear before you to support the proposed amendments to bill 6720, to increase the penalty for negligent homicide with a motor vehicle involving illegal street racing. [to a fine of not more than \$3500 or imprisonment of not more than three years or both] and that section 14-224 of the general statutes be amended to increase the penalty for a first offense of illegal racing to a fine of not less than \$150 or more than \$600 or imprisonment of not more than one year or both and mandatory completion of 15 hours of reckless aggressive driving class and in the case of any subsequent offense of illegal racing to a fine of not less than \$300 or more than \$1000 or imprisonment of not more than a year or both mandatory completion of 15 hours of a reckless aggressive driving class and a 60 day suspension of such person is motor vehicle operating license.

Last April, shortly after I arrived at work, I received a call from my son Sean. He informed me that Shalymar, the lovely young lady whom he had taken to the prom two years prior, had been killed in a motor vehicle accident on the previous evening.

Two others died as well - a 23-year-old woman named Brianna Torres, pregnant with a baby girl. Her baby shower had been celebrated the night before. Briana died, and despite the best efforts of first responders and medical personnel, the baby died as well. Her name was Luna.

This tragedy occurred in the context of illegal street racing. Two other cars were involved - one racing, the other carrying three unwitting passengers who crashed head-on into one of the racing vehicles.

Members of the committee, there are no words, there are no ways which could adequately express the sorrow and sadness to which I bore witness following this tragedy.

Shalymar Herrera was 18 years old, a Private First Class in the United States Army. A proud member of the Civil Air Patrol, Shaly had graduated from Bridgeport Military Academy. Shaly planned to attend the University of Connecticut to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. Everyone loved Shaly.

HB 7378

Five days later, I stood on line at Shalymar's memorial service to pay my respects to the Herrera family. There at Shaly's casket stood her mother Liza, delirious with grief. Her father Jesus, stood vigil over Shalymar, not leaving her side. Her younger brother Jelian stood with his parents. The line stretched around the city block.

I have attended many funerals in my 51 years on this earth, but never, never like the one of Shalymar Herrera. The image of her parents standing next to their daughter, her brother standing next to his sister at her casket will forever be seared in my memory. There are times for me when it's hard to think about anything else. But her family! living in the house where their Shalymar lived, passing her empty bedroom, eating at the table where her chair stands empty, recalling Shaly's presence in every square inch of their house.

Somehow on that night of April 8th, the drivers of these two cars thought that illegal street racing was a good idea, and now we are left without precious Shalymar, Briana and Luna.

Please amend Bill 6720 to raise awareness and fear of significant consequences to deter and prevent this senseless, reckless tragedy from occurring again.

Good Evening CT Legislators and Committee,

My name is Franshelie Pellot- Alvarez and I am writing this letter because I SUPPORT HB 7378 for Illegal Racing and Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle.

I support this bill to be approved for illegal racing in these streets. The reason I support this bill is because I do not believe it is fair that innocent people lose their lives for the mistake and actions of others putting in danger their lives as well as other passenger's and people around them. It is not the first time and it wont be the last time something so horrible likes this will happen but we can fight for the penalties to be increased for those that are responsible to be held accountable. If we increase this law and its penalties it may bring some knowledge to our youth about the consequences of when you commit such acts.

Today we are TWO more families, and TWO more MOTHERS who have lost their children for the irresponsibility of another person.

Shalymar Herrera had a bright future ahead of herself filled with opportunities for herself and she was ROBBED from living it. She was a determined, smart, responsible, and hard-working ARMY soldier who isn't with us today due to someone else's carelessness whose life she vouched to SAVE AND PROTECT as

well as all others and in the careless act of that person her life was taken away.

We must fight not only for her but for the youth of our future to know and be aware of the dangers of illegal racing and we can start by increasing the penalties, approving this bill, and educating the youth, who are OUR future.

Thank you for giving me time to express myself, and may you consider approving HB # 7378 for Illegal Racing and Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle.

Good Morning CT Legislators and Committee,

My name is Stephanie Rivera, I live in Hartford CT, and I'm writing this letter because I SUPPORT HB #7378 in reference to increasing the penalties for Illegal Racing and Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle.

In my opinion I believe this bill should be PASSED because it increases the penalties for those who commit such crimes. When you become a driver, YOU are RESPONSIBLE for those in your vehicle aside from yourself. You must think of your passengers and of others around you when you are driving. YOU are Responsible for your actions while driving and the SAFETY of those in your vehicle. And you should be held accountable for the outcome of illegal racing if committed.

Shalymar was just an 18-year-old young woman who had just came back from an ARMY training, and she trusted the driver with her life to make the right decisions while he drove. She and other victims had their lives ahead of themselves, and the driver was so careless that he thought it was okay to race at such a speed with people in his car and others around that 3 INNOCENT LIVES were taken that day!

Not only are the family members and friends suffering, but as a community we grief together the loss of OUR SOLDIER and the other two victims and those as well who we injured that day.

AND as a COMMUNITY we will FIGHT to make sure this bill gets approved and our youth knows the danger from illegal racing.

Thank you for allowing to share with you all as to why I think you should consider APPROVING this bill #7378 in reference to Illegal Racing and Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle.

Blanchard, Deborah

From: Ivette <iverodriguez@att.net>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 5:51 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: HB 6720

HB 7378

Shalymar, was a precious angel that was taken from us too soon! Ivette Rodriguez from New Haven, CT.

Sent from my iPhone

Peterson, Bobbye

From: Savannah Rodriguez <savan.rodriguez@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 9:48 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Justice For Shalymar

7378
HB 7378

My name is Savannah Rodriguez. I live in New Haven, Connecticut. Here's why I believe HB 6720 should be passed. I am 18 years old. I remember when I first met Shalymar, I was immediately amazed at how sweet and kind hearted she was. I was inspired by her, seeing someone my age who was doing so good in life so fast made me want to be like her. I Remember how she could walk into a room and everyones spirit would be lifted, she cared for everyone and everything. She would give the clothes off her back to help someone. I was getting ready for school when I heard my father yelling on the phone. I ran out and he told me she passed away. I remember feeling like the world stopped, I screamed and fell into my dads arms crying. I remember wondering how could this happen to her she had the world in her hand, she never did anything bad, she was innocent and young, it didn't feel real. All day I was waiting for someone to tell me it wasn't true. I was hoping to get a text from her that she was okay. That day never came. I am 18 years old and I have lost so many friends to street racing. I am 18 years old and I have my friends in the hospital fighting for their lives. I am 18 years old I shouldn't be losing my friends this young. I should be seeing my friends graduate, get their first apartments, find love, grow old like they should. I am 18 years old and I do not want anymore phone calls that another young loved one died do to street racing. Shalymar was taken from everyone who loves her because of this. She deserved better and so did all the other children, mothers, and fathers who's lives have been taken so young. Please pass HB 6720 to help prevent this loss of life. Justiceforshalymar ☐

Peterson, Bobbye

From: Hilda Rosas (mediante Documentos de Google) <rosasvilledas3@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 9:23 AM
To: JudTestimony **HB 7378**
Subject: Documento sin título - Invitación para editar

7378

Hilda Rosas te invitó a **editar** el siguiente documento



Documento sin título



Case 6720

Hello good morning, legislators of ct

My name is Hilda Rosas I'm here representing the bil 6720.

I agree that this proposal is increasing since I am the mother of 3 teenagers and I would not like it since my daughters drive and it hurts me to see how families suffer the loss of a family member due to the irresponsibility of illegal careers, as it hurts me to see how are you 2 families of SHALYMAR herrera and BRIANA are suffering

Shalimar was my daughter's friend since kindergarden, she and my daughter were the smallest ones in which she was a happy girl I always saw her smiling, and when I saw her at school when I asked her to study she always told me that the illusion I had to go to ARMY and she succeeded because she was a girl who was not afraid of anything.

In which she had many dreams but they were truncated in that fatal accident that had

I ask you, I beg you with my heart in my hand that if you are parents, put yourself for a moment in the place of these parents who suffer and increase this law

Thank you for being able to express myself and I hope that someone of you with all respect will help us

God bless you

Thank you

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Dear house of Legislatures. Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Am here to support bill 6720. I can't begin to imagine the loss if a child. In life, we have rules, policies, and laws to abide by. Illegal racing is as equal as drunk driving or texting driving. I were to get a speeding ticket it's considered reckless driving and it stays on my record. Yet, the consequences of illegal driving do not have the same outcome. These individuals that caused 3 lives and continue to drive and kept their license. Shalymar was an exceptional young woman who accomplished in 7 months in the military then most would in a lifetime. Her dreams of becoming a veterinarian snatched from her by the hands of irresponsible people. She signed up to serve and protect our country not to die in the hands of negligent people. She stood for courage, integrity, and courage. The young woman that will never be, a young

mother who will never see her children grow up and a 4-year old that will never know how wonderful his mother was, an unborn child who will never have a chance. Where is the justice, what message are we sending if don't make a change to stop illegal racing? These 3 people are not the first to lose their lives in this manner. That is why it is so important to make a change to make individuals aware that your actions have severe consequences, they don't get to just move on as if nothing happened. I pray that something good comes of all this tragedy. If nothing else we have a moral obligation to all who served and are serving our country. To all those, we were on their way to making a difference.

Thank You
Respectfully
Rosa Sanchez

7378

HB 7378

Good morning CT Legislators,

My name is Amelia Santoyo, I'm 19 years old and am from Bridgeport, CT. I am standing here today in support of Bill 6720. Not only am I supporting this bill because of the lives that were lost on April 08, 2018 but it is unfair to those who have to deal with all the pain that comes after a traumatic event like this one. You never know what can happen and you never think it will happen to someone close to you until it actually happens to you. The aftermath always hits harder and it doesn't get any easier as days go by. You only have to hope for the best and wish your pain slowly eases. Grief is something many of us have been dealing with since April of 2018. I met Shalymar when we were about 3 going on 4 years old. Throughout the years we went to the same school and the good thing about everything was that we were always placed in the same class. I got to know and grow up with such a beautiful soul. Such an amazing, humble, and rewarding human being. If you knew Shalymar you knew that whatever she wanted, she would not stop until she got it. Shalymar was a great friend, daughter, sister, etc. This bill should be approved because nobody deserves to lose their life over an irresponsible person. You shouldn't be put in a situation where you're afraid to get in the car with someone else. You shouldn't be thinking if your life is going to end because of the actions others make. As others should not get behind a vehicle and start driving as if they were in a video game. Whether it's increasing the license suspension to anything higher but something needs to be done. This is because everyone takes things without care or precaution that people think every little thing they can slip away with it. If you have the heart to hear me out and know the pain that I'm going through ; please pass this bill on. Thank you for taking the time out of your day to hear me out. Have a good day.

HB 7378**Blanchard, Deborah**

From: Ricardo Sealy <ricardo.sealy@snet.net>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 7:05 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: HB6720

If, by law, a baby cannot be aborted upon reaching a specific gestational age, then a law should also be passed to protect said baby from the hazards and quite possibly death from the willful and conscious actions of reckless drivers.

Ricardo Sealy
HB6720
Shalymar

Blanchard, Deborah

From: DyAija D Soriano <sdyaia@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 8:46 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: HB 6720 — 7378 HB 7378

Good morning legislators,

My name is DyAija Soriano and I reside in West Haven Connecticut. Before I continue, I would like to thank you guys for taking out the time to view my statement on passing the HB 6720 bill. In November of 2016 I met one of my best friends, two years later on April 8th, 2018, I lost her to a horrific car accident caused by two teens neglecting the laws of driving. My Best Friend Shalymar Herrera lost her life along with a friend of hers named Brianna Torres and her unborn child named Luna.

Shalymar was like a breath of fresh air. There was nothing else I can do other than smile and laugh every minute I spent with her. She graduated from Bridgeport military Academy and directly went into the Army to serve our country. I remember when she shared stories with me about how she will be the worlds best veterinarian. I can no longer hear those stories. It is now impossible to hear her infectious laugh and see her beautiful face.

I LOST my Best Friend all because two SOBER teens wanted to have fun and race on a two way street. If we get bill 6720 passed , we will no longer have to worry about teens recklessly driving and putting their lives along with others In danger. With this bill, many people will second guess the decisions they make because they will be aware that they will face consequences that they would rather not make see the light of day. I thank you for your time and hope you consider bill 6720.

Sent from my iPhone

Peterson, Bobbye

From: Jullissa Torres <jullissat6@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 9:28 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Testimony for Bill 6720

HB 7378

Good morning legislators And chair persons of the comity .

My name is Jullissa Torres from Bridgeport Ct I am here to support bill 6720 . I have lost two of the most precious people in my life my daughter Briana Torres And Luna Rose Torres they were both senceless spantaniace if street racing they had there whole life ahead of them when there lives were snuff out along left there hope and dreams and all the joy that life could have bought them .

My Daughter Briana Torres was my Best friend we did it all Together we laugh together we did it all Laugh,cry, play , plan, we did it all together but know there's a bear of emptiness in my heart no longer I can here her voice or the cry of my grand daughter Luna Rose .

All because of the cheap thrill of Illegal street Racing i am here for the hope of prevent this happening to other families . I empeore you to make the punishment for Illegal Racing and negligent man slaughter I ask Of you to Support and approve bill 6720 .

Thank you

Sincerely

Jullissa Torres .

March 20, 2019

Dear Senator Winfield and Representative Stafstrom,

My name is Diane Wilczewski, devastated and grieving mother of Courtney Wilczewski. I just found out that there will be a public hearing on Monday, March 25th. I am away and unable to attend with such short notice but feel very strongly with respect to the bill Raised House Bill-No. 7378, An Act Concerning Negligent Homicide with a Motor Vehicle and Illegal Racing. Our family 100% support this bill because of our personal situation.

Our precious daughter and sister, Courtney Wilczewski – age 22, was killed on May 26, 2015 by Felix Pagan. This was not an accident but a careless disregard of his medical condition which caused a head on collision with our daughter ending in her tragic death. Charged with negligent homicide, he only spent 30 days in jail and a short 18 months on probation. How can anyone justify someone only serving 30 days in jail for causing the death of another? Dealing with the loss is horrible enough but then to find out the laws are so lenient is another knife to our hearts.

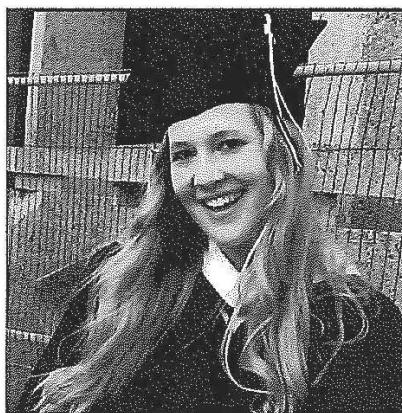
Life without Courtney is beyond difficult. To this day it is hard to catch my breath. I have yet to find the perfect words to describe the daily pain without her. It is an ache so deep in our hearts and souls that it is immeasurable. Our family's life since that day is defined as Before and After. It is impossible to explain to anyone how much Courtney is loved and missed. We can only tell you that our suffering has not and will never end. I live with unimaginable visuals and memories from the accident scene, frustration from the unfair process and exacerbated medical issues since her death.

Nothing will ever bring our Courtney back. Knowing that in some way we could help future victim's families makes us hopeful. I implore you to pass this bill. The additional time and higher fees might just deter someone from making a bad decision and save someone's life. Our family would have felt just a little better knowing that the person that killed our baby was being held more accountable.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

With hope and appreciation,

Diane Wilczewski
Courtney's mom and biggest fan



May 28, 1992 – May 26, 2015