



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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**Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director
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JUDICIARY COMMITTEE – MARCH 7, 2025

Raised S.B. 1284

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ILLEGAL USE OF CERTAIN VEHICLES AND STREET TAKEOVERS

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) is opposed to Section 4 of *S. B. 1284, An Act Concerning the Illegal Use of Certain Vehicles and Street Takeovers* and concerned in regard to the application of Section 4 and the adoption of municipal ordinances in Section 3 upon people who gather with the “intent to observe and actually observe” the street takeover. Section 4 would subject **anyone** present at such an event, to having their operator’s license or privilege permanently revoked for a third violation. By doing so, everyone, including simply spectators and/or spectators who perhaps may share information in anyway, including social media, will be treated as harshly as a person who owns a motor vehicle used in the takeover or who acts as a “starter, timekeeper or judge”, places a “wager” on it, or “knowingly incite or recruits” to advance the street takeover.

The bill amends subsection (b) of *C.G.S. 14-111, Suspension or revocation of registration, license or right to operate*. Currently the statute requires the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to suspend a person’s license, without a hearing, if the person has committed certain violations including a violation of subsection (c) *C.G.S. 14-224, Evasion of responsibility in operation of motor vehicles. Racing. Required removal of motor vehicle from traveled portion of highway. Impoundment or fine*, which provides:

(c) (1) No person shall operate a motor vehicle upon any public highway or parking area for any race, contest, demonstration of speed or skill or street takeover. As used in this section, “street takeover” means taking over a portion of a public highway or parking

area by blocking or impeding the regular flow of traffic with intent to cause disorder or create a nuisance for other users of such highway or parking area,

(2) No person shall (A) possess a motor vehicle under circumstances manifesting an intent that it be used in a race, contest, demonstration or street takeover prohibited under subdivision (1) of this subsection, (B) act as a starter, timekeeper or judge at any such race, contest, demonstration or street takeover, or (C) wager on the outcome of any such race, contest, demonstration or street takeover, or (D) knowingly incite or recruit by any action, method, device or means, including, but not limited to, electronic or social media, in advance of any such race, contest, demonstration or street takeover, any person for participation in the performance of any such race, contest, demonstration or street takeover.

The current penalty for a violation of subsection (b) of C.G.S. 14-111 is a mandatory license suspension of “not less than 30 days or more than 90 days.” For any subsequent violation, a license suspension of not less than 90 days is mandated. Per the statute, the license suspension is required and applicable to not only the racer but for anyone who is not racing, including a *spectator*, even if an **innocent bystander** is present at the time one of these events occurs all without a hearing.

Section 4 of the bill provides expands the license revocation period to 45 days for a first and subsequent violation if subsection (c) (street takeovers) in lieu of the current range. For a third violation, the bill mandates that the person’s operator license or privilege be **permanently revoked**. This increased penalty would be applicable to any youth adjudged a youthful offender. Again, this revocation would apply to anyone even if not racing. This **permanent revocation** is extremely punitive especially for youth who lack the maturity to appreciate their actions or who may be in a place with no way to remove themselves due to where they reside. The General Assembly has recognized the existence of brain development science in addressing lengthy sentences imposed on persons under the age of 18 and certain persons under the age of 21 who have committed serious offenses. The permanent revocation, for life, of a person’s license, with no possibility of obtaining such, will carry with it severe collateral consequences which can impede a person from obtaining, among other things, employment, education, and training.

Therefore, this office respectfully requests language pertaining to the permanent revocation of an operator’s license in that Section 4 be stricken from the bill and narrowing the application of any ordinances that if adopted could penalize through ordinances person who gather to watch a street takeover. Thank you.