

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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Chief of Staff

Rep. Antonio Guerrero, Co-Chairman  
Sen. Donald J. DeFronzo, Co-Chairman  
Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

February 23, 2009

***The Department of Public Safety supports adoption of a "move over" law in Connecticut.***

Senate Bill 741 and House Bills 5261, 5643, 5894, 6071 and 6225 all propose adoption of a "move over" law in Connecticut. The Department of Public Safety has an agency proposal for a "move over" law that will be heard in the Public Safety and Security Committee tomorrow. The language of that bill, HB 6453, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DUTY OF MOTOR VEHICLES WHEN APPROACHING STATIONARY EMERGENCY VEHICLES, has been reviewed and approved by the Commissioner of Transportation and representatives of the state's trucking industry.

A "Move Over" law is designed to protect emergency responders, including Police, Fire, EMS, DOT Workers, and Wrecker Operators while working at incident scenes along our busiest highways. Connecticut is one of only six states in the nation that does not have a move over law. Enactment of a "Move Over" law will afford an opportunity for public safety professionals to educate motorists about the dangers of approaching emergency responders along our limited access highways.

Nationally, since 1997, over 150 law enforcement officers have been struck and killed by passing traffic. In the one hundred and five year history of the Connecticut State Police, fourteen troopers have been struck and killed by passing motorists, leaving behind spouses and children to suffer the painful loss of a loved one.

In 2008, the department had a total of 248 accidents. The majority of these accidents were the result of careless and negligent operation by motorists who strike state police cruisers. On 1/28/09, during inclement weather conditions (snow), five department accidents were recorded in 24 hour period in which motorists slid into the rear end of state police cruisers.

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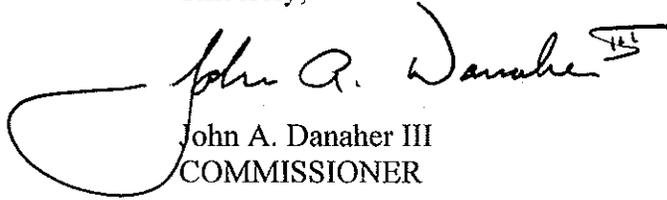
“Move Over Law” HB 6453

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While the safety of our troopers and other emergency responders is the primary reason to enact a “move over law” in Connecticut, it should be pointed out that passage of such a bill would also likely provide savings to the state in reducing workmen’s compensation claims, funds allocated to repair and replace damaged state police cruisers, and overtime costs replacing injured troopers. When a Connecticut State Police cruiser is completely “totaled” in a motor vehicle crash, it costs the agency \$43,000.00 to replace the vehicle and equipment inside the vehicle. Since 2002, the Department of Public Safety has expended 6.3 million in Workmen’s Compensation claims as a result of motor vehicle accidents. In 2008, the department spent \$396,709 .00 to fix and repair motor vehicles involved in crashes.

This law, if enacted, would help emergency responders on our highways, police, fire, EMS, DOT construction workers, and wrecker operators. We have an ethical responsibility to ensure that our emergency responders are afforded the safest possible working environment. I am confident that enacting this piece of legislation will save lives and prevent needless injuries.

Sincerely,



John A. Danaher III  
COMMISSIONER