

My name is Jack Dunn and I am speaking on behalf of SB 982, specifically section 18 subsection C which allows for members of volunteer ambulance associations to use flashing blue lights. I personally have been a volunteer EMT and firefighter in Middlesex County for a little over four years. In Connecticut most towns are served by volunteer fire and EMS organizations and in most cases those volunteer firefighters or EMTs are responding from their homes or work to their respective fire or EMS departments or directly to emergencies. In order to facilitate this Connecticut has courtesy light laws allowing for members of fire departments to use blue lights and members of volunteer ambulance agencies to use green lights. Blue lights are widely recognized as an emergency light throughout our nation and since many EMS agencies in Connecticut are also a part of their local fire departments the volunteer EMTs in those departments are able to use blue lights.

Green lights are not as common as blue lights in the state however in Middlesex County where most Fire and EMS departments are separate organizations they are more common. Unfortunately green lights are not effective in allowing members of volunteer ambulance associations to get to emergencies and quite frankly they cause a lot of confusion on the road. Most people I have come across have absolutely no clue what a flashing green light signifies. I have had people pull up alongside me on numerous occasions while I'm responding to an emergency and ask me what they're for. Furthermore even some law enforcement are unaware what a flashing green light signifies and I have been pulled over before by a Connecticut State Police Trooper who asked me what my flashing green lights are for. I have even been told by dispatchers on numerous occasions that people have called 911 reporting someone driving with flashing green lights as they were not sure what they were for and thought I was doing something illegal.

If the intent of the courtesy light law in Connecticut is to allow for volunteer ambulance association members to get to emergencies in a faster and safer manner by requesting the right of way green lights do not serve this purpose. Furthermore with the Department of Transportation putting green lights on all of their new trucks it diminishes the importance of them further and creates further opportunity for confusion on the road. I have talked about this issue with numerous chiefs of public safety organizations and everyone has been in agreement that allowing for members of Volunteer Ambulance Agencies to use blue lights would not only allow for those members to get to emergencies faster thus expediting care but would also reduce confusion on the road making it safer for everyone. Additionally by allowing both volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance agency members to use the same color light we would relieve a financial burden by no longer requiring those who serve in both agencies to need to purchase two expensive lights. Thank you.