



Testimony of  
**Sal Luciano, President  
Connecticut AFL-CIO**

Transportation Committee  
January 27, 2021

***SB 261 An Act Concerning Recommendations of the Department of Motor Vehicles***

***HB 5429 An Act Concerning Pedestrian Safety, Vision Zero Council, Speed Limits in  
Municipalities, Fines and Charges for Certain Violations, the Greenways  
Commemorative Account and Maintenance Work Zone and School Zone Safety  
Enforcement***

Good morning Senator Cassano, Representative Lemar and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Sal Luciano, and I am proud to serve as the President of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, a federation of hundreds of local unions representing more than 220,000 members in the private sector, public sector, and building trades. Our members live and work in every city and town in our state and reflect the diversity that makes Connecticut great. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

***SB 261 An Act Concerning Recommendations of the Department of Motor Vehicles - OPPOSE***

While the Connecticut AFL-CIO supports the goal of reducing consumer wait times and enhancing customer service at the DMV, we cannot support this bill with the inclusion of lines 757-760:

*"The commissioner may collaborate or enter into agreements with such contractors and municipalities to implement technological solutions and other improvements to reduce customer wait times and enhance customer convenience."*

The most effective and cost-effective way to improve these essential agency operations is to consult and engage with staff who perform them. By working collaboratively with DMV employees who serve the public directly, agency leadership can develop unique, specific changes to improve Connecticut taxpayers' experience, without saddling DMV with expensive private consultants and the one-size-fits-all remedies.

Instead, lines 757-760 provide far too much discretion to the Commissioner, opening to the door to a variety of no-bid outsourcing schemes that constrain legislative oversight and invite potential corruption. We caution the Transportation Committee from greenlighting the privatization of any state function without first requiring the agency to comply with the requirements of the State Contracting Standards Board.

The State Contracting Standards Board (SCSB) was enacted in 2007 as an independent Executive Branch agency after former Governor Rowland pled guilty to accepting vacations, airfare and home

improvements from contractors who did business with the state. The SCSB is charged with ensuring the effectiveness and integrity of the state contracting and procurement processes and also has significant authority to oversee the outsourcing of state services. Since 2010, if a state agency seeks to enter into a contract that privatizes services performed by state employees, it must conduct a cost-benefit analysis on the privatization contract.

We often hear that state government should be run more like a business. While the state's mission differs greatly than many espoused by the business community, there are things the state can learn from business. I suspect that no business would enter into any contract without first doing its full due diligence like conducting a cost-benefit analysis or completing a cost-effectiveness evaluation. Lines 757-760 appear to attempt to bypass this requirement. We urge the Committee to reject this bill or remove lines 757-760.

**HB 5429 An Act Concerning Pedestrian Safety, Vision Zero Council, Speed Limits in Municipalities, Fines and Charges for Certain Violations, the Greenways Commemorative Account and Maintenance Work Zone and School Zone Safety Enforcement – SUPPORT**

The men and women employed as highway maintainers at the Department of Transportation (DOT) are dedicated public servants. They plow snow, trim trees and make repairs to our state roads so that Connecticut residents can travel safely every day. Too often their jobs are dangerous, even life threatening, because motorists repeatedly fail to consider their safety. With fewer state police on the roads and drivers increasingly distracted by mobile devices, DOT workers literally risk their lives when they enter a work zone.

For the last several years, the General Assembly has taken steps to combat injuries and death in work zones. Drivers who speed through work zones can face increased fines and even criminal charges for endangering, injuring or killing someone in a work zone. But the lack of state police presence and enforcement has made this approach ineffective.

HB 5429 would take a new approach that does not rely on the presence of a state police officer to encourage responsible motorist behavior. The bill authorizes DOT to use speed cameras to detect and enforce speeding violations highway work zones when state police personnel are not present. Violators would be issued a ticket, which would hopefully bring awareness to this issue and deter them from repeating their offense.

HB 5429 would also require all monies in the Special Transportation Funds' work zone safety account to be used exclusively to pay the costs of traffic enforcement and control by state police in highway work zones. With more officers deployed for enforcement, we are hopeful that drivers will be more attentive and less reckless.

We urge the committee to show every DOT highway maintainer that you value their safety by supporting this bill. Thank you.