

**Public Safety and Security Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

Bill No.: SB-233

Title: AN ACT AUTHORIZING USE OF STEADY BLUE LIGHTS ON WRECKERS.

Vote Date: 3/19/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/29/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Sen. Paul Cicarella, 34th Dist.

Rep. Dave W. Yaccarino, 87th Dist.

Rep. Tom Delnicki, 14th Dist.

Rep. John E. Piscopo, 76th Dist.

Rep. Gary A. Turco, 27th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill allows tow trucks and wreckers to be equipped with steady blue lights.

Roadside workers have reported the dangers of their daily working conditions siting distracted drivers not slowing down when seeing their current amber lights. With this change, more attention may be drawn to their vehicles in order to effectively slow down passing traffic when operating roadside assistance thus limiting collisions.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Tom Delnicki, State Representative, Connecticut General Assembly, Supports:

Endorses the bill for its potential to enhance visibility and enable more effective execution of duties. Sites the impact on response time, a critical aspect that stands to benefit significantly from the provisions outlined in this legislation. Suggests an addition to this bill that would include authorization for blue lights to be used on vehicles used by environmental service companies when responding to requests from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to address hazardous material contamination at accident scenes. Explains

how this change would be crucial in improving safety and expediting response times during incidents involving hazardous materials.

Salena Khan, Tow Operator, Life On The Line, Supports:

Sites the dangers of their work when responding to breakdowns on major roadways and the statistics of deaths within the tow operating industry. Explains the public understanding and implication of blue lights verses the overuse and unregulated use of amber lights. Expresses, by following suit of other states implementing these lights we hope to reduce the injuries and fatalities that continue to increase in one of the most dangerous but necessary jobs to the public.

Charles Marano, Owner, Untouchable Towing llc, Supports:

Explains how people don't typically slow down when seeing amber lights but do when seeing blue lights on the roadways. States that with blue lights these vehicles will be solidified as emergency response vehicles.

Alec Slatky, Managing Director, Public Government Affairs, AAA, Supports:

Explains how all roadside workers are vulnerable to crashes resulting from speeding or inattentive drivers. Expresses how blue lights are not a "silver bullet" to keeping tow truck drivers safe but a necessary step towards safer working conditions.

Tim Vibert, President, Towing Recovery Professionals, Supports:

Explains that with amber lights, most drivers ignore the law and do not move over for their vehicles, leading to countless near misses and deaths. Sites the statistics of deaths in the tow industry.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

John Carew, Legislative Representative, CSFA, Opposes:

States concerns that roadside personnel may be confused with police vehicles if permitted to use blue flashing lights. Explains that fire trucks have been subjected to collisions from distracted drivers even with their red and white lights. Suggests the possibility and advantage of using green flashing lights.

Howard Handler, Sr. Director, Government Affairs, National Insurance Crime Bureau, Opposes:

Expresses a list of concerns with allowing towers to have blue lights on their vehicles. This includes the lack of evidence that blue lights are more effective in slowing down traffic than amber lights. They add by allowing the use of blue lights towers may confuse and intimidate consumers and incorrectly give them the impression that the wrecker is police owned or affiliated and that the consumer must follow the directions of the tower, including agreeing to the tow. While the bill would not allow towers to deploy blue lights while in transit, they suggest that due to the very competitive nature of the towing industry, towers may race to be the first to hook up the vehicle or vehicles at the accident scene. Some unscrupulous towers may be tempted to turn on the blue lights while in transit to arrive even faster.

Reported by: Casey Urso (Assistant Clerk)

Date: March 28th, 2024