



RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT
Colonel Bradford Connor
Warwick Police Dept.

VICE PRESIDENT
Chief Thomas Oates
Woonsocket Police Dept.

SERGEANT AT ARMS
Colonel Michael Correia
Barrington Police Dept.

SECRETARY
Colonel Michael Winquist
Cranston Police Dept.

TREASURER
Chief Matthew Moynihan
South Kingstown Police
Dept.

IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT
Chief Kevin Lynch
Bristol Police Dept.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Chief Sidney Wordell, Ret.

March 20, 2024

The Honorable Robert Craven, Sr.
Chairman, House Committee on Judiciary
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: House Bill No. H7631 Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles – Motor Vehicle Offenses

Dear Chairman Craven:

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association (RIPCA) to voice our **support** for the proposed legislation noted above, being heard before the House Committee on Judiciary.

On average, Rhode Island law enforcement agencies arrest approximately 3,000 drivers for driving under the influence every year. The average offender has a blood alcohol content of approximately .17 – more than twice the legal limit. Unfortunately, Rhode Island also has one of the highest “refusal” rates of over 70%. Although as a state we have made some great strides in reducing alcohol impaired driving deaths our numbers are still alarmingly high! We still rank above the national average, in the top third of states with fatalities involving impaired drivers.

The proposed legislation would assist the efforts of law enforcement and the entire Judicial system by increasing the “look-back-period from 5 to 10 years on third and subsequent offenses of driving impaired. Although we cannot arrest our way out of this problem, increasing penalties is a proven deterrent.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony on behalf of the RIPCA and as always am available for any follow-up questions you or the committee may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Sidney Wordell (ret.)
Executive Director
Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association