

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

SB 80	(421)	1957
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Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing(s) and/or Senate and House of Representatives Proceedings

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JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS

TRANSPORTATION

CONN  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY  
1957

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

TUESDAY

MARCH 19, 1957

Rep. John H. Noble, House Chairman, presiding.

Members present: Senators: Hueston  
 Representatives: Noble, Rowley,  
 Blankenbiller, Cowles, Burke,  
 Gwiazdowski, Keane, Kesaris,  
 Greene, Mortensen, Perry, Piper,  
 Piscitelli, Pultz, Smith, Welles.

Chairman Noble: If any senators or representatives wish to speak on any of the bills, we will be glad to hear them.

Sen. Elmer S. Watson, 4th Dist.: Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to speak on the first four bills, - S.B. 80 (Watson) AN ACT CONCERNING A PENALTY FOR SECOND OFFENDERS WHO OPERATE MOTOR VEHICLES WHILE LICENSE OR REGISTRATION IS UNDER SUSPENSION. - S.B. 82 (Watson) AN ACT CONCERNING A PENALTY FOR SECOND OFFENDERS WHO OPERATE MOTOR VEHICLES WITHOUT A LICENSE - S.B. 83 (Watson) AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPOSITION OF A PENALTY FOR SPEEDING ON SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES.

On S.B. 84 (Watson) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUSPENSION OF MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATORS' LICENSES UNDER A POINT SYSTEM, I strongly urge the revival of the point system for keeping track of a motorist's record. This system was established in 1947, but is not now used.

Judging a driver by the points he compiles for various infractions provides a mechanical way of suspending licenses and doing it fairly. It is working well in other states.

Under this bill, all persons who lose their licenses, unless such suspensions are mandatory in the law or result from an accumulation of points, are permitted to have a hearing within five days, whereas under the present suspension program for speeders, the suspensions are mandatory and no hearings by the Motor Vehicle Department are provided.

Rep. Helen W. Mackie, Westport: On H.B. 1680 (Rep. Mackie) AN ACT CONCERNING PROHIBITING LICENSES DRIVERS UNDER EIGHTEEN FROM DRIVING AFTER DARK, many accidents involving teen-agers take place after dark. May I

first, we can combine the general subject matter on all these bills, so I will entertain any person who wishes to speak. So we will start off, and as we go along, we will start with S.B. 80 first, and we will hear from anyone who wishes to speak on S.B. 80. Those in favor.

S.B. 80 (Watson) AN ACT CONCERNING A PENALTY FOR SECOND OFFENDERS WHO OPERATE MOTOR VEHICLES WHILE LICENSE OR REGISTRATION IS UNDER SUSPENSION.

Mr. Robert Catlin, Chairman, Connecticut Safety Commission:  
I would like to speak in favor of Senator Watson's bill, S.B. 80, because I think it is high time that the State of Connecticut took some action relative to these people who feel that regardless of any suspensions placed upon them by the Motor Vehicle Department can continue to operate. Last year there were 1638 people convicted in this state of driving while their licenses were under suspension. That probably represents about a third or a quarter of those that are actually driving. These 1638 were people who were found guilty of operating, and some of them for their second and third offense. Until we create in the minds of our motorists more respect for the law, and not let them flaunt it in our face, I think it is to our benefit to do so, and I think that if this bill has any weakness at all, is that it provides for a fine and a prison sentence, whereas I would like to see these people jail sentenced to break it up. We are very much in favor of this bill.

Rep. Noble: Who else is in favor of S.B. 80?

Mr. Francis W. Hogan, Motor Vehicle Department: Speaking for the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, and for myself as Director of Operators' Control in the Department of Motor Vehicles, we feel stiffer penalties besides fine and imprisonment for operating under suspension are desirable. Too many suspended operators continue to drive. Maybe there should be a provision that a driver who has in his possession a suspended license is required to prove that the license is not illegally held. Why I add that is this. A great many people refuse to accept a certified letter. They are notified by the Postal Department that there is a letter at the Post Office, and they know what it is, and refuse to pick it up, and it requires a pretty difficult time for the Department chasing them down to secure that license. Actually they are under suspension, but they may have in their possession a license. I think that provision should be covered in any final bill that the committee brings out. Thank you.

Rep. Noble: Is there anyone else in favor of S.B. 80? Is there anyone opposed? If not, we will go on to the next bill.

S.B. 82 (Watson) AN ACT CONCERNING A PENALTY FOR SECOND OFFENDERS WHO OPERATE MOTOR VEHICLES WITHOUT A LICENSE.

Rep. Noble: Is there anyone in favor of this bill?

Mr. Robert Catlin, Chairman, Connecticut Safety Commission: Mr. Chairman, again I think it is high time that we took some action relative to these people who feel that they can continue to drive in the state of Connecticut without a license. Last year there were 2288 persons found guilty of driving in this state without a license, and I imagine some of them have been driving a matter of years, not a matter of months. It does seem to me that we should not only put a stiff penalty and threaten them with jail sentences if they drive without a license, but we should also take into consideration a very important point, which I think is becoming more and more evident, namely, that people who drive without a license are in many instances people who are also undersuspension or operating under a fictitious name. We must have thousands of people in this state today who evade the law by getting a new license under an assumed name at a different location or a different address, and I think this bill should be supported and tightened up if anything. Thank you.

Rep. Noble: Anyone else in favor of this bill?

Mr. Francis W. Hogan, Dept. of Motor Vehicles: I am speaking for the Commissioner. Requiring an additional fine as a penalty for second offense of operating without a license seems desirable.

Rep. Noble: Anyone else in favor? Anyone opposed to the bill? The hearing will then move on to S. B. 83.

S.B. 83 (Watson) AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPOSITION OF A PENALTY FOR SPEEDING ON SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES.

Rep. Noble: Anyone in favor of this bill?

Mr. Robert Catlin: Mr. Chairman, again speaking for the Connecticut Safety Commission, we think that considering the number of violations we are finding on our highways, regardless of the edict handed down by our Governor,

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favorable report and the passage of the bill.

SENATOR WATSON:

Mr. President, this bill will require anyone who owns or becomes the owner of a motor vehicle which was formerly used as a school bus, to repaint the vehicle some other color than National school bus chrome. It is a bill which will help the public to identify busses that are no longer school busses and will not stop behind them when they are discharging or receiving passengers. It will also be necessary for them to paint out the word, "school bus", or "stop on signal" on these busses when they are no longer used as school busses.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further. If not, those in favor signify by saying AYE, opposed NO. The report of the committee is accepted; the bill is passed.

THE CLERK:

Cal. No. 1244, File No. 1096, Senate Bill No. 80. An Act concerning a penalty for second offenders who operate motor vehicles while license or registration is under suspension. Favorable report, Transportation.

THE CHAIR:

The Senator from the 4th.

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SENATOR WATSON:

Mr. President, I move for the acceptance of the committee's favorable report and the passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on acceptance of the committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SENATOR WATSON:

Mr. President, this bill adds a second offense conviction for people who are driving while their license or registration is under suspension.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further. If not, all those in favor say AYE, opposed? The bill is passed.

Senator Goldberg, presiding

THE CLERK:

Cal. No. 1247, File No. 1097, Senate Bill 44. An Act concerning membership of the Civil Defense Council. Favorable report, Judiciary and Governmental Functions.

THE CHAIR:

The Senator from the 21st.

SENATOR SHANNON:

Mr. President, I move for acceptance of the committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

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Thursday, February 14, 1957

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THE CLERK:

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Axel W. Lindstrom a County Commissioner for Fairfield County.

THE SPEAKER:

Tabled for the Calendar and Printing.

THE CLERK:

Unfavorable reports of Joint Standing Committee.

House Bill No. 73. An act concerning legislative appearances.

THE SPEAKER:

Tabled for the Calendar.

THE CLERK:

House Bill No. 80. An act granting permission to  
Clara Andre to sue the State.

THE SPEAKER:

Tabled for the Calendar.

THE CLERK:

House Bill No. 93. An act concerning pedestrians on  
highways during hours of darkness.

THE SPEAKER:

Tabled for the Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Business from the Senate. Changes of reference.

The following reports recommending a change of reference  
were received from the Committees indicated. They take leave  
to report they have the following bills under consideration