

## Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1389

AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN ORDINANCES CONCERNING STREET

**Title:** TAKEOVERS.

**Vote Date:** 3/18/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/4/2025

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

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### REASONS FOR BILL:

In early September 2024, there was a street take over on I-95 involving with over 100 motorcycles. Two Connecticut men were arrested in connection to that event. Cameras and filming equipment were found in their possession. In late December 2024, two spectators were hospitalized after being hit by a car participating in the street takeover. Seven people have been arrested or detained in connection to the street takeover in North Haven, Connecticut. This follows a growing trend across the country in which dozens or hundreds of people gather on open streets to do donuts or other unsafe stunts often involving motor vehicles. These displays have shut down traffic and disrupted neighborhoods and businesses. These street takeovers have resulted in severe injuries and even fatalities.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Commissioner Ronnell A. Higgins, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protections](#)

Commissioner Higgins states that the agency supports SB 1389, and that section 1 of the bill will allow for the forfeiture and seizure of the vehicles used in street takeovers. The Commissioner also states that to those who organize and engage in these events Forfeiture and seizure is a meaningful consequence and strong deterrent. Another provision that the agency supports is the ability to auction off the vehicles, which will provide a financial incentive to municipalities to enforce the ordinances. The Commissioner also states that the revenue generated from these auctions can be reinvested in public safety measures.

#### **Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Rebecca Bombero, City of New Haven Chief Administrator Office**

The Administrator's Office was involved in the creation and roll out of the local ATV ordinance, which has significantly reduced the traffic violations involving ATVs in New Haven. Deputy Chief Bombero states that while they were in attendance during ATV appeals board, they often heard individuals say that they did not regret their traffic violations, but they had learned their lesson, because of the confiscation of their vehicles. Deputy Chief Bombero states that Street take overs pose a significant danger to public safety and New Haven deals with these situations by using several tools, such as weather and intelligence (200 new traffic cameras and license plate readers) to predict when and where street take overs may occur. Then they proactively stage a response. However, these operations can be costly, and many participants can escape the net. The Administrator's Office requests that the option to dispose of vehicles that have been forfeited. Deputy Chief Bombero states that due to the ordinance against ATVs, the city has accumulated a lot of vehicles that have been placed into storage. The fear is that if sold, they will be put back into circulation amongst those who will misuse them. The agency understands that things may be different for commercial vehicles like cars.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

##### **Chief Joseph D. McNeil Stratford Police Department**

Chief McNeil states that street takeovers result in increased risk for serious injury or fatalities due to high-speed driving, and other dangerous maneuvers. They also state that there has often been public and private property damage left behind after these incidents. Damage such as burnouts on the roads, damage to side walks, and other vehicles in the vicinity. Chief McNeil also stated that takeovers have disrupted public peace by blocking the flow of traffic, including emergency vehicles, and created a climate of fear and intimidation for residents in the surrounding areas, who may fear for their safety. Chief McNeil states that SB 1389 has clearer definitions of what constitutes as a street takeover, providing law enforcement with a greater ability to carry out their duties, and the ability to hold street takeover organizers accountable.

##### **Connecticut Police Chiefs Association**

The Police Chiefs Association states that street takeovers have occurred at any time of the day or night, which makes them difficult to anticipate. They state that when responding to these events, officers have encountered a mob mentality which can be a dangerous situation for officers to be in. The Police Chiefs Association hopes that the ability to seize a vehicle used in one of these takeovers will not only be a deterrent but also help to recuperate costs of spending resources to deal takeovers.

##### **Besty Gara Connecticut Council of Small Towns**

COST supports SB 1389 and appreciates the increase in penalties which encourages municipalities to enforce ordinances against the illegal use of certain vehicles on roadways.

**Mike Muzynski Connecticut Conference of Municipalities**

Mr. Muzynski suggests that the ability to seize and auction as well as the ability to destroy vehicles, when necessary, would be very helpful because there are times where vehicles are modified to a point where they have little to no commercial value and are unable to be sold. In cases like this the only option currently available is to store vehicles indefinitely, which is a financial and logistical burden on municipalities.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Jess Zaccagnino Policy Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union**

Jess Zaccagnino opposes SB 1389 because they believe that the goal of the committee should be to reimagine the role of the police and to reduce over policing especially in communities of color. Zaccagnino states that the most common way police come into contact with communities of color is through traffic stops. They state that the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project reported that drivers of color were more likely to be stopped and searched than their white counter parts, who were more likely to have contraband discovered on them during a search. Zaccagnino states that younger people are more likely to experience wider racial disparities and unique harms in the criminal legal system, and therefore the policy makers must reduce the role of policing in these communities instead of investing more into the expansion of policing.

**Reported by: Geva Tinker**

**Date: 03/28/25**