

Exhibit 6

Letter from Ronnell Higgins to Sen. Bob Duff and Rep. Ann Hughes 2
(Aug. 19, 2025)

COMMISSIONER RONNELL A. HIGGINS



DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

August 19, 2025

Sent Via Email

Senator Bob Duff
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building Room 3300
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Representative Anne Hughes
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building Room 4021
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Senator Duff and Representative Hughes:

Thank you for reaching out to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to express your concerns about the Connecticut State Police's enforcement activities at protests on Connecticut highway overpasses. I appreciate the opportunity to provide information and clarification around this topic.

I am familiar with the recent incidents along I-95 and the Merritt Parkway and have reviewed relevant State Police 911 calls, dispatch records, and body worn camera videos. While I am happy to discuss these matters generally, I cannot discuss the specifics of two cases, one of which involves an arrest and one that is subject to an ongoing internal affairs investigation prompted by a citizen complaint. I am sure that you will agree with me that it would be unfair for the parties in those matters if I weighed in on the merits without letting the appropriate processes play out.

The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the Connecticut State Police recognize that individuals have constitutionally protected rights to engage in free speech, including peaceful demonstrations with signs and posters in



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public areas. While these rights are firmly protected, they may be subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions, particularly in areas adjacent to high-speed travel lanes or critical infrastructure, when necessary to ensure public safety and security. Our Troopers honor individuals' free exercise of speech subject only to these content-neutral restrictions enacted by the Legislature. *See Burns v. Barrett*, 212 Conn. 176, 186-187 (Conn. 1989) (recognizing that the State's interest in promoting highway safety is "quite substantial" in the context of regulating signage on the highways.)

Connecticut law prohibits attaching unauthorized signs on state highways, bridges, and overpasses, prohibits individuals from intentionally or recklessly obstructing traffic on the roadways, and prohibits the intentional blocking of public sidewalks. *See generally* Conn. Gen. Stat. §§13a-124; 53a-182; and 53a-182a. Collectively, these laws recognize that certain activities along our busy highways may pose a safety hazard by obstructing visibility or distracting motorists, thereby creating a risk of accidents. In addition, these laws understand the dangers posed by objects falling from highway overpasses, which may strike a car below or cause a driver to swerve.

For active protests on highway overpasses Troopers take appropriate actions based on specific facts and circumstances of each case. For example, Troopers may give verbal warnings to the protestors or issue tickets. In more serious cases or matters involving repeat offenders, Troopers may make arrests, often in consultation with state prosecutors. There is no one-size fits all approach and Troopers' actions are necessarily guided by the unique circumstances of each case. For example, State Police responding to 911 calls from rush-hour drivers that overpass protestors are creating a dangerous slow-down in traffic need to respond more quickly to that situation than when State Police receive a non-urgent DOT complaint that a single sign has been attached to an overpass structure.

I reject any assertion that Troopers are unfairly targeting certain overpass protestors based upon any perceived political or social affiliations. Troopers are agnostic to the

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protestors' specific cause(s) and enforce the State's laws in a content-neutral manner. Indeed, many of the recent interactions between Troopers and overpass protestors have been prompted by the public, not self-initiated by State Police, including 911 emergency calls from drivers reporting dangerous driving conditions created by the protests.

In addition, I disagree with any suggestion that Troopers are required to engage in lengthy, protracted legal discourse with protestors when responding to emergency calls. As you are both aware, the Connecticut State Police are significantly understaffed below the 1,248 personnel called for by Conn. Gen. Stat. §29-4. Troops G (Bridgeport), Troop I (Bethany) and Troop F (Westbrook), which patrol the I-95 and Merritt Parkway routes, each receive approximately 150-200 calls for service a day. A Trooper assigned to one of these barracks is expected to provide a clear and lawful basis for his or her actions, not engage in lengthy debates around the multifaceted legal contours of the First Amendment.

All that being said, I am committed to continuous improvement and want to ensure that our Troopers are following the law diligently while upholding public safety on our highways. To that end, I have directed the following actions:

- I have asked the Chief State's Attorney and State's Attorney's Offices to provide updated legal guidance around protests for each of State Police's 11 troops;
- I have directed the Connecticut State Police Training Academy to prepare an updated Training Bulletin for all Troopers outlining the relevant statutory provisions related to highway protests;
- I have coordinated with the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association to ensure that local police are aware of the activity restrictions around the State's highways that may otherwise not apply to municipal locations; and
- I have directed the Connecticut State Police to post all available bodyworn camera video from Troopers who have responded to calls for service related to

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highway protests on cspnews.org, along with any relevant 911 emergency calls. This action will provide full transparency of the Troopers' actions.

The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the Connecticut State Police are tasked with the critical responsibility of balancing the enforcement of laws with the protection of individual constitutional rights, all in pursuit of our paramount objective of ensuring public safety. We are firmly committed to delivering service with empathy, responding with compassion, performing duties with integrity, and upholding the law with impartiality and the highest standards of professionalism.

Very truly yours,

Ronnell A. Higgins
Commissioner