

**City of Chicago Building Committee Meeting**  
**October 28, 2003**  
**Testimony Statement of Raymond Mattera**

My name is Raymond Mattera. I live at [hidden] in Providence, Rhode Island. I have been an employee of the City of Providence for the past seven years presently holding the position of Stockroom Supervisor. My wife Diane and I are the parents of four children and the proud grandparents of four grandchildren. The last time I kissed and hugged my beautiful daughter Tammy, she was in a black body bag. Tammy was 29 years old; she left us two wonderful grandchildren -- Nathan age nine, and Nicholas age 2 1/2 and a devoted husband, Jeremy. She died in the West Warwick Station Night Club fire on February 20, 2003. We waited four days at Crowne Plaza before she was found. She was so badly burnt that they needed her dental records to identify her. None of us had the opportunity to say goodbye to Tammy. I had to bury my child -- no parent should EVER have to go through this hell on earth! That is why I am here today.

Tammy was one of the 100 victims that died that night, the worst night in Rhode Island history. One hundred people died in three minutes; it takes microwave popcorn longer to pop. Over 160 people were injured. Some victims have no arms or hands. They are physically and mentally scarred for life. They can no longer hug their children. And there were other victims as well, there are children who lost both parents and will never see them again on this earth. My daughter, Tammy, will never experience the excitement of seeing her children grow. She won't experience the first day of kindergarten much less the graduation from grade school, high school and college. She won't be there for her children's weddings or share their joy of having children of their own, Tammy's grandchildren.

No one directly connected with the Station Night Club fire will ever be the same. The State of Rhode Island will never be the same. Those three minutes changed all of us forever. There were no sprinklers at the Station Night Club, the doors in the hallway opened the wrong way, some exit signs were not working, and those that were functioning properly were almost impossible to see because the heavy black smoke hid them quickly, exits were hard to find, there was highly flammable foam on the walls to help with sound, and there were many fire violations but because of the age of the building these issues fell under the grandfather clause in the local building codes or in other words were ignored.

If they had just one sprinkler head over the stage when the pyrotechnics were lit and the curtains caught on fire, the results would have been drastically different. Instead of allowing the curtains, then the toxic panels on the walls to catch fire, that single sprinkler should have contained the fire, according to simulated tests. Sprinkler systems do save lives. Perhaps if the Station Night Club had been required to have that sprinkler system throughout the building, my daughter Tammy and 99 others would be alive today and she could be playing with her children. Legislators must do away with the grandfather clauses that allow substandard and non-existent fire safety measures to exist in all clubs, restaurants and places of entertainment that hold 100 people or more. We must have proper and timely inspections on all entertainment, clubs, restaurants, schools, high-rises and nursing homes.

I hope my presence here today will make a difference to the decisions of this council here in Chicago and hope that none of you sitting here today will ever have to experience the dreadful pain and emptiness that my wife and I live with every day.