



Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

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Testimony of Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

Nancy Kushins, Executive Director
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

SB 153: An Act Concerning the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons

SB 154: An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons

And

H.B. No. 5215: An Act Concerning Sexual Assault by Hypnotists

Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Public Hearing, February 24, 2006

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Nancy Kushins and I am the Executive Director of Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS). CONNSACS is the statewide association of nine community-based rape crisis centers in Connecticut. Our mission is to end sexual violence and ensure high quality, comprehensive and culturally competent sexual assault victim services.

During fiscal year 2004-2005 CONNSACS' community-based program staff and volunteers provided services to 4,742 sexual assault victims and their families. Our member centers also provided risk reduction and prevention education to more than 41,279 children and youth and to nearly 9,000 members of the general public and training for over 3,020 professionals, including law enforcement personnel.

I am here today to testify on behalf of CONNSACS in strong support of three bills, House Bill 5215 An Act Concerning Sexual Assault by Hypnotists, Senate Bill 153 An Act Concerning the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons, and Senate Bill 154 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons.

The relationship between hypnotists and their patients, as with psychotherapists and their patients, is one that is based on trust. Hypnotists who violate that trust by manipulating and sexually assaulting their patients must be held accountable. The criminal penalties as stated in this bill are appropriate.



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Having served as a member of the trafficking task force since 2004, I can attest to the progress being made by having representatives from various disciplines at the table to discuss the issue of trafficking in persons. We have successfully educated one another regarding the respective roles of our organizations, and have been educated by outside speakers with expertise in the field of human trafficking and issues facing the victims of these terrible atrocities.

We learned that there is still a great deal of work to be done. Public awareness, while greatly enhanced over the past two years, still needs greater emphasis. With increased awareness, it is expected that more trafficking victims will surface. When this happens, support systems must be in place to ensure that victims are safe and their basic human needs are met. In order to do that, social services and healthcare organizations will need training to recognize trafficking victims and be knowledgeable about the community resources available to assist them. Funding, as recommended in SB 154, will be a critical component to maintain the momentum that has occurred under Senator Stillman's leadership. Additionally, this bill strengthens our criminal statutes with respect to human trafficking.

We also learned that entities and individuals with additional perspectives should be at the table, and SB 153 proposes adding representatives from the Judicial Branch to serve on the task force.

Consider this true story: A young woman arrives in Connecticut late one evening. She was a victim of sexual exploitation, forced to take on private clients and well as street clients. She was prohibited from keeping any of the money she earned. Those who exploited her ensured that she was compliant by administering large doses of drugs, keeping her addicted and dependent. One day, instead of turning in her money, she took those funds, got on a bus and rode as far as her money would take her – hence her arrival in Connecticut. Getting off the bus, she went to a phone booth. In the phone booth was a magnet with a sexual assault hotline number. She was provided with counseling, emergency funds and temporary shelter. Presently, she is in school to learn a trade, and is receiving assistance to overcome the drug addiction.

I have been proud to serve on the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons, and look forward to seeing continued progress in ensuring that rights, benefits and services for victims are available and easily accessible. Trafficking victims deserve no less.

Thank you for your consideration.