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**TO: Judiciary Committee**

**RE: Raised Bill No. 5819 (LCO No. 3202)  
An Act Concerning Harassment of Crime Victims, etc.**

Good afternoon, my name is Barbara J. Ruhe. I am an attorney in private practice with an office in Wethersfield. I practice primarily in the Family and Juvenile Courts. In my almost 30 years of practice I have handled hundreds and perhaps thousands of cases involving domestic violence and child abuse. I had the privilege of appearing before this committee on Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup> to testify on Raised House Bill No. 5813, An Act Concerning Victims of Crimes. I have arranged to have a written copy of the key parts of my comments on Raised Bill No. 5813 submitted in writing for clarity of the legislative history and for those members of the committee who could not be present for my testimony.

I commented then and I comment now as a result of my representation of a rape victim known as "Isabel" who was harassed via the court system by her rapist for several years.

I have read and reviewed the language of Raised Bill No. 5819. I am mindful of the comments that committee members made in response to my prior testimony that perhaps the remedies articulated in Raised Bill No. 5813 would provide too significant a burden on the court system. I am deeply concerned that the remedy proposed in Section 1(a) and (b) of Raised Bill No. 5813 imposes a significant burden, yet again, on the victims of crime. The Judicial system is funded by fees and tax dollars. It is run by capable, sophisticated, educated, trained personnel. The Judicial system is a system with ready access to resources to seek redress of grievances. Victims usually do not have the resources, the access to power or the sophistication of the constitutionally mandated branch of government known as the Judiciary. Section 1 of this raised bill leaves the door open to having victims re-traumatized by their perpetrators by the potential for the bringing of a civil action and the serving of that action. Section 1 of this raised bill presumes that a victim would have a lawyer and/or know how to respond to an action brought by a perpetrator. Many members of the bar provide significant pro bono services for those in need of such. The magnitude of the need usually out strips the resources. Individuals who are incarcerated in our prisons have significant rights and protects. I do not believe that those rights and protections extend to being able under any circumstances

that I can imagine to provide them with the needs and the blessings of this august assembly to sue their victims. This is especially true in cases involving the kinds of Family Violence and sexual and other assaults outlined in Raised Bill No. 5813. I urge this committee to delete Section 1 of Raised Bill No. 5819. It is neither a strong nor courageous solution to the problem that the "Isabels" of this state face.

As to Section 5 of Raised Bill No. 5819, I think this is a very appropriate statutory change. I believe it will lead to fewer frivolous filings from correctional institutions and will reduce the costs born by the upstanding, responsible citizens and tax payers of this great state.

I regret that I can not submit my testimony in person due to other commitments. I appreciate your attention to my comments. Should any of you wish for further clarification I can be contacted through my office.