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**Testimony before the Connecticut General Assembly Judiciary Committee
Public Hearing: February 24, 2006**

In support of Raised Bill No. 153, "An Act Concerning the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons"

In support of Raised Bill No.154, "An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons"

My name is Sister Mary Alice Synkewecz, RSM and I am the director of the Collaborative Center for Justice. The Center is sponsored by six congregations of Catholic women religious in Connecticut with a membership of over 800 sisters and associates. The mission of the Center is to enhance human dignity by responding to injustices of society.

Our Center supports Raised Bills No.153 and 152.

In 2003, I was invited by then-Representative Andrea L Stillman to be a member of the Legislative Study Committee on the "Trafficking of Women and Children in Connecticut." In 2004, the CT General Assembly adopted Special Act 04-8, An Act Establishing An Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons. Still interested in the work of the task force, I continued to attend these meetings during the year. I fully support the January 2006 final report of the Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons and the six proposed recommendations found on page 11 of the report.

Last September, The Collaborative Center for Justice sponsored a Symposium on Human Trafficking. The Symposium was well attended and brought together persons from a variety of disciplines, agencies and organizations. Their presentations to a diversified audience of social service workers, members of law enforcement agencies, students, members of religious Congregations, as well as, members of the general public, heightened the awareness, challenges and inherent difficulties facing those dealing with this problem.

Since 2003, when the work of the Legislative Study Committee began, public awareness across the world, and especially in the United States has grown steadily concerning this problem of human trafficking, but awareness is only as meaningful as the action it engenders.

The recommendations from the Interagency Task Force would further move Connecticut to action. This is a very complex problem and there is an ongoing need to balance the focus on law enforcement, exploitation and human rights. Partnerships among various agencies and law enforcement need to be created as we look to develop models and outreach in providing services to the victims. These partnerships are going to take commitment, creativity, and funding in order to put structures and programs in place that will respond to the needs of human trafficking victims.

We fully support the implementation of the recommendations of the interagency task force and to continue the existence of the task force and increase membership and expand its duties. There is much to be done!

I ask that the Judiciary Committee support **Raised Bills No. 153 and No. 154.**

Thank You

Daughters of the Holy Spirit * Daughters of Mary of the Immaculate Conception * Sisters of the Congregation de Notre Dame*
Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery * Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Regional Community of Connecticut
Connecticut Province of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur