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TO: Judiciary Committee

**RE: Raised Bill No. 5813 (LCO No. 3137)
An Act Concerning Victims of Crimes**

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.

In the fall of 2005 I was contacted and asked if I would represent a woman who has been come to be known as "Isabel". Isabel is not her real name, as the victim of a sexual assault, her identity is protected. Isabel's identity has been protected within the court system and the media. There, however, was one person from whom her identity was not protected, her rapist, who is an inmate in the prison system of this state. Isabel's rapist filed 20+ pro se law suits in the Superior Courts of this state. He sued Isabel in more than one of those suits. In the other suits he sued the Governor, the General Assembly, the State Supreme and Appellate Courts, several judges, the Commissioner of Corrections, State's Attorneys, Public Defenders, corrections officers, the Hartford Police Department, Mayor Perez of Hartford, DCF employees, Robert Killian (Hartford Probate judge), several attorneys in private practice and the list goes on. The suits were filed in several jurisdictions across the state. In each case he was granted a fee waiver and his marshal fees were paid by the tax payers of Connecticut. In several of the cases he was granted hearings. The rapist used the powers of subpoena to force Isabel to attend court hearings and be subject to extensive examination by him about the rape he committed upon her. In one instance the examination of Isabel was allowed to go on over a period of 3 days and resulted in over 300 pages of transcript. In spite of the fact that there were numerous attorneys representing the lengthy list of defendants, Isabel, as a victim, was not afforded counsel. The rapist used the ability to have subpoenas served to keep track of Isabel's whereabouts and to harass her through the court system.

Not long after I began representing Isabel, a combined efforts was made by the Office of the Attorney General, the Chief State's Attorney's Office, the Office of the Victim's Advocate, to prevent the rapist from using the court system to harass Isabel. In October of 2005, a standing Criminal Restraining order was issued, prohibiting the rapist from having any form of contact with Isabel. The

Office of the Victim's Advocate was named as her agent of service. Subsequently 2 judges in different venues entered orders prohibiting the filing of any further law suits without specific court permission.

I am articulating this history so that you understand the human background of Raised Bill 5813. I have met Isabel. I have read the extensive transcript. The problem that this bill addresses has the face of a real person for me. No victim should have to go through what Isabel has gone through. I urge you to pass this bill. If this statute had been in place Isabel would have been spared significant pain and the taxpayers of Connecticut would have been spared significant expense. No criminal should have the right to harass his victim through the court system at taxpayer expense.