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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**Judiciary Committee PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Friday, February 24, 2006**

**Testimony in SUPPORT of**  
**House Bill No. 5215, AAC Sexual Assault By Hypnotists**

Sen. McDonald, Rep. Lawlor and Members of the Committee:

I wish to express my strong support for **House Bill No. 5215, AAC Sexual Assault By Hypnotists**, and I'd like to thank the Chairs and committee members for bringing this proposal forward for public comment.

**HB-5215** would add hypnotists to statutes on our books that ban consensual or coerced sexual relations between psychotherapists and their patients. Psychotherapists convicted in these cases are, rightly, subject to severe criminal penalties.

Currently, Connecticut law is silent on hypnotists. This means no license or registration. No minimum training. No continuing education. No background checks. No Code of Ethics. And no accountability. Hypnotists can - in some cases - call themselves certified after completing a course over one weekend.

From 2000 to 2003, a hypnotist in my hometown of Milford sexually assaulted seven of his patients after he had placed them under hypnosis. I was appalled at this breach of trust and flagrant abuse of power over another's mind, and will.

After learning of this tragedy, I made a pledge to take steps to stop such crimes from happening again. I've continued to meet with the victims, and, along with Kevin Lawlor - who successfully prosecuted the Milford hypnotist - all of them deserve credit for having the courage to come forward and seek change.

I believe there is a legitimate role for hypnosis in our society. Hypnosis can be invaluable therapy for weight loss or smoking cessation; it has also proven to be a critical tool in some police investigations.

But hypnotists who abuse their craft deserve to be punished to the full extent of the law.

In closing, I would like to mention that a companion measure to **HB-5215**, which will be raised and heard in the General Law Committee, will call for hypnotists to register with the state's Department of Consumer Protection.

This issue is one of my highest priorities this year. I thank the committee for their consideration, and I hope members will join me in support of **HB-5215**.