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**Testimony of James Papillo, State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Tuesday, March 14, 2006**

Good morning Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is James Papillo and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of:

Senate Bill No. 594, *An Act Concerning the Unlawful Use or Possession of Scanning Devices and Reencoders*

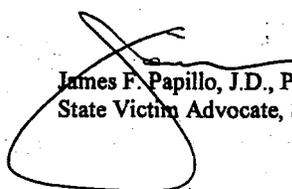
Identity (ID) theft has been called America's fastest growing crime. The Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates that hundreds of thousands of Americans become ID theft victims each year and the most recent statistics published by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) show that occurrences of ID theft are on the rise in Connecticut.

Senate Bill No. 594 will prohibit the possession of or use of the scanning device utilized by ID thieves to steal credit and debit card numbers and, further, will prohibit the use of a reencoder device utilized by ID thieves to place the stolen card numbers on a different card. This method, known as "skimming" is often committed by employees in retail establishments and may not be discovered by the victim until long after the damage has been done.

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) has created and published a helpful guide entitled, "Identity Theft: A Guide for Connecticut Citizens" which is available to the public on our website (www.ct.gov/ova). This publication explains what ID theft is, how to avoid becoming a victim of ID theft, and what to do if you become a victim of ID theft. As a result of publishing this guide, the OVA experienced an increase in the number of calls from victims of ID theft to share their frustrations and concerns about being victimized by ID theft.

Victims of ID theft can spend months or even years trying to get their life (financial and personal) back in order. Connecticut is considered a leader and has set an example for other states in passing laws that assist victims of ID theft. I strongly urge the committee to further these efforts by supporting Senate Bill No. 594.

Thank you for considering my testimony.


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