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**Testimony of James Papillo, State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Monday, March 20, 2006**

Good afternoon 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:

Raised Senate Bill No. 56, *An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders*

Raised Senate Bill No. 619, *An Act Concerning the Seizure of Motor Vehicles of Sexual Predators*

Raised House Bill No. 5812, *An Act Concerning the Registration and Supervision of Sexual Offenders*

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) strongly supports any and all legislative efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the Sex Offender Registry, the supervision of sex offenders and sexual predators, and the penalties for committing sexual offenses in Connecticut. The OVA, therefore, strongly supports the main components of each of these proposed bills and would advocate combing the strengths of each proposal to achieve maximum effectiveness in our response to such heinous crimes.

From the general public's perspective, the effectiveness of the Sex Offender Registry is dependent primarily on the accuracy of information contained therein and, thus, is dependent to a great extent upon the resources devoted to maintaining the Registry. Unfortunately, we have relied too heavily on the honesty of convicted sex offenders to fulfill their statutory obligations to register under the law and to keep the system informed as to their whereabouts. And sadly, as we have witnessed through media reports in our state and elsewhere, there can be tragic consequences resulting from such reliance.

As of July 1, 2005, there were 563,806 registered sex offenders in the United States.¹ The increased mobility of our society has led to "lost" sex offenders, those who fail to comply with registration duties yet remain undetected. In addition to that, the wide disparity among the state programs in both registration and notification procedures permits, and actually encourages, sex offenders to "shop around" for the state with the least stringent laws, in order to live in communities with relative anonymity.

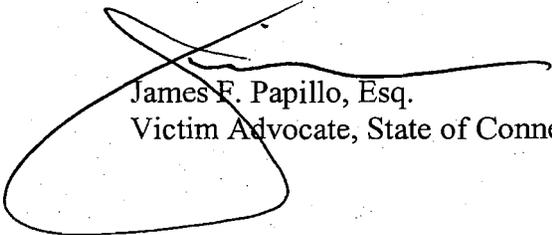
¹ National Center for Missing & Exploited Children- Attached is a United States map showing the breakdown, by state, of registered sex offenders. www.missingkids.com

Some basic realities that lawmakers face as they address the issue of sex offenders, not only in Connecticut but around the country, are (1) most sex offenders are not in prison, and those who are tend to serve limited sentences, (2) most sex offenders are largely unknown to people in the community, (3) sex offenders have a high risk of re-offending² and (4) the system for providing supervision to sex offenders is overwhelmed. In addition to that, technological freedoms, such as myspace.com and others, have created an environment for sexual predators to browse the internet in search of their next victim. In Connecticut alone, nearly 20 investigations are pending for alleged sexual assaults where the minor victims met the perpetrators on myspace.com.

Raised Senate Bill No. 56, Raised Senate Bill No. 619 and Raised House Bill No. 5812 each make specific proposals that address the consequences to convicted sex offenders and sexual predators, the registration obligations and failures of convicted sex offenders and the desperate need for additional resources to manage the increased population of convicted sex offenders. Although each bill individually has positive aspects, I strongly urge the committee to examine the bills collectively so that the end result produces maximum effectiveness.

Finally, the proposal contained in Section 1 of House Bill 5812 regarding the creation of a Risk Assessment Board is critical, in the undersigned's view, and is the linchpin by which the success or failure of any decision making regarding risk to public and victim safety will be determined. Therefore, I strongly urge the committee to include this important proposal in any legislation enacted by this body to respond to the problems and issues surrounding the release and supervision of sex offenders in Connecticut.

Thank you for considering my testimony.



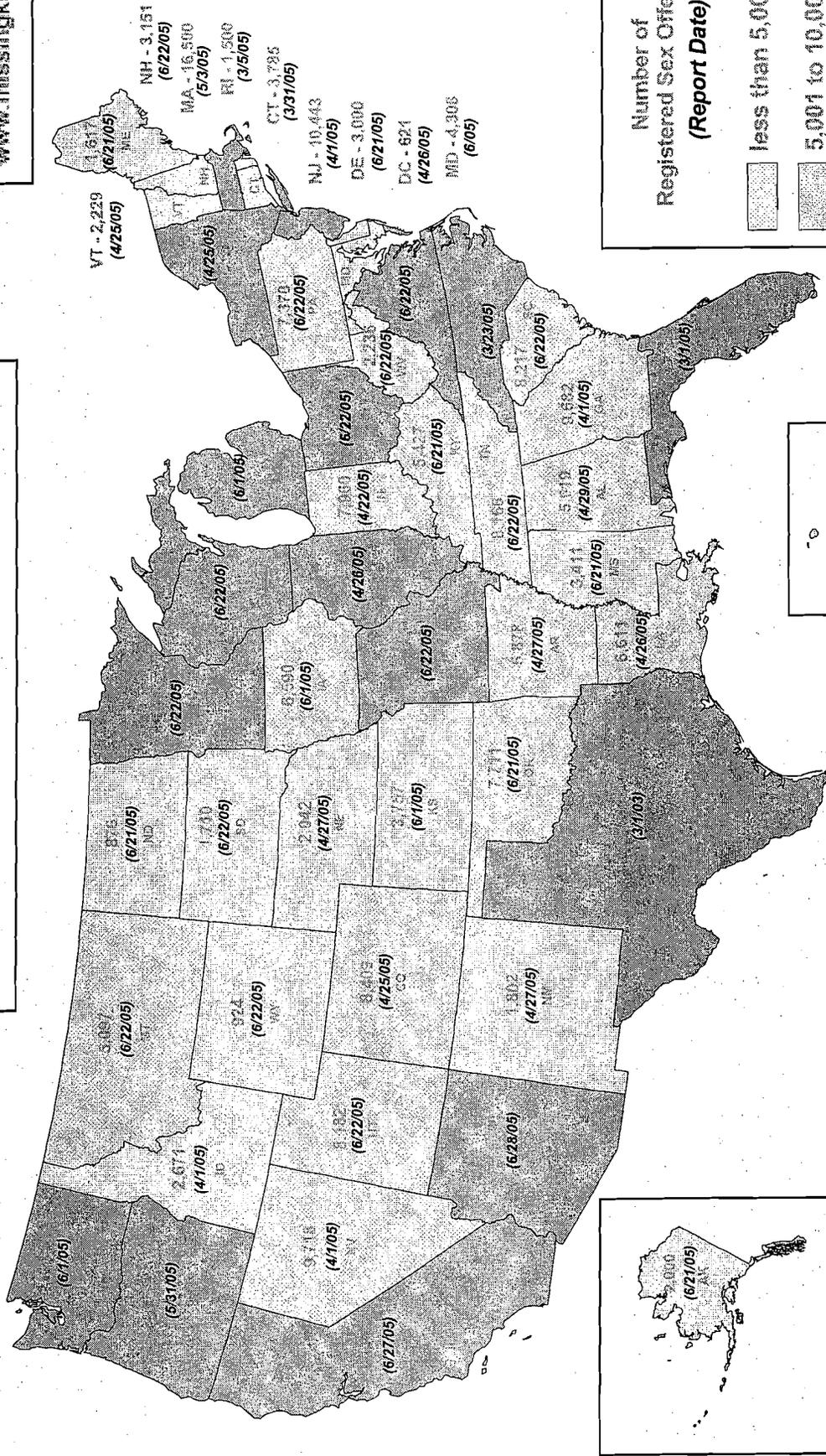
James F. Papillo, Esq.
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Attachments

² U.S. Department of Justice/Bureau of Justice Statistics- Attached is data released, for the first time, on the re-arrest, reconviction and re-imprisonment of sex offenders who were tracked for 3 years after their release from prisons in 15 states in 1994. www.ojp.gov/bjs

Registered Sex Offenders in the United States TOTAL - 563,806*

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN
www.missingkids.com



Number of Registered Sex Offenders (Report Date)

- less than 5,000 (19)
- 5,001 to 10,000 (15)
- more than 10,001 (17)

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
Case Analysis and Support Division
September 12, 2005

*As of July 1, 2005
Source: Individual State Sex Offender Registries
Source: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, Alexandria, VA
Source: Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc., Redlands, CA

ADVANCE FOR RELEASE AT 4:30 P.M. EST

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2003

Bureau of Justice Statistics

Contact: Stu Smith 202-307-0784

After hours: 301-983-9354

5 PERCENT OF SEX OFFENDERS REARRESTED FOR ANOTHER SEX CRIME WITHIN 3 YEARS OF PRISON RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Within 3 years following their 1994 state prison release, 5.3 percent of sex offenders (men who had committed rape or sexual assault) were rearrested for another sex crime, the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. If all crimes are included, 43 percent of sex offenders were rearrested for various offenses.

Sex offenders were less likely than non-sex offenders to be rearrested for any offense — 43 percent of sex offenders versus 68 percent of non-sex offenders. But sex offenders were about four times more likely than non-sex offenders to be arrested for another sex crime after their discharge from prison — 5.3 percent of sex offenders versus 1.3 percent of non-sex offenders.

Sex offenders with the highest rate of rearrest for another sex offense were those who had a history of prior arrests for various crimes. While 3.3 percent of sex offenders with one prior arrest were arrested for another sex crime after their release, that percentage more than doubled (7.4 percent) for those with 16 or more prior arrests for different types of crimes. Of the released sex offenders who allegedly committed another sex crime, 40 percent perpetrated the new offense within a year or less from their prison discharge.

Of the almost 9,700 sex offenders released in 1994, nearly 4,300 were identified as child molesters. An estimated 3.3 percent of the 4,300 released child molesters were rearrested for another sex crime against a child within 3 years. Most of the children they were alleged to have molested after leaving prison were age 13 or younger.

Other BJS surveys have shown that 70 percent of all men in prison for a sex crime were men whose victim was a child. In almost half of the child-victim cases, the child was the prisoner's own son or daughter or other relative.

The average sentence imposed on the 9,700 sex offenders was 8 years and, on average, 3 1/2 years of those 8 years were actually served prior to release. The average sentence imposed on the 4,300 child molesters was approximately 7 years and, on average, child molesters were released after serving 3 of the 7 years.

Of the released sex offenders, 3.5 percent were reconvicted for a sex crime within the 3-year follow-up period, 24 percent were reconvicted for any new offense and 38.6 percent were returned to prison, either because they received another prison sentence or because of a parole violation.

Of the 9,700 sex offenders, 67 percent were white males and 32 percent were black males. The percentage rearrested for another sex crime after their release was 5.3 percent of white males and 5.6 percent of black males.

Half of the 9,700 sex offenders were over the age of 35 when released. Recidivism studies typically find that the older the prisoner when released, the lower the rate of recidivism. However, although this study did find the lowest rearrest for a sex crime (3.3 percent) did belong to the oldest sex offenders — 45 years old and older — other age group comparisons were inconsistent. The percentage rearrested for another sex crime after their release was 6.1 percent of those ages 18-24, 5.5 percent of those ages 25-29, 5.8 percent of those ages 30-34, 6.1 percent of those ages 35-39, 5.6 percent of those ages 40-44 and 3.3 percent of those ages 45 or older.

For 85 percent of those sex offenders who were arrested for another sex crime, the arrest

occurred in the same state that released them. For the remaining 15 percent, the arrest was in a different state.

The data are from a study that documented levels of recidivism among all 272,111 men and women released from state prisons in 15 states in 1994. The 272,111 included 9,691 male sex offenders. The 9,691 are two-thirds of all the male sex offenders released from state prisons in the United States in 1994. The study represents the largest followup ever conducted of convicted sex offenders following discharge from prison and provides the most comprehensive assessment of their behavior after release.