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Testimony of James Papillo, State Victim Advocate Submitted to the Committee on Education Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Good Morning Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and distinguished members of the Education 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:

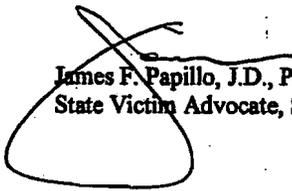
Raised Senate Bill No. 1094, An Act Concerning School Bullying

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) strongly supports any and all efforts to prevent, respond to and reduce incidents of school violence in our state. Current law requires all school boards to develop a policy addressing bullying that enables students to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators. The law also requires school administrators to investigate any written reports filed and to include an intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying.

While many, if not most, students have been bullied at some point in their school career, some are chronic victims of bullying. Victims of bullying suffer consequences beyond embarrassment. Some experience psychological and/or physical distress, are frequently absent and cannot concentrate on schoolwork. Generally, bullying victims have low self-esteem and the impact can last for years.

A school's acknowledgment of bullying behavior, the policies established by the school for reporting incidents of bullying and the school's response to incidents of bullying behavior will set the tone for students, staff, parents and the community. Raised Senate Bill No. 1094 sets the tone that bullying behavior will not be tolerated in Connecticut public schools and, additionally, will establish penalties for noncompliance with the reporting requirements.

I strongly urge the committee to support this important proposal. Thank you for considering my testimony.


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