



NARAL
Pro-Choice Connecticut

Testimony of Carolyn Treiss, Executive Director, NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut
Human Services Committee, March 13, 2007

***In support of Senate Bill 1343, An Act Concerning Compassionate Care
for Victims of Sexual Assault***

Senator Harris, Representative Villano and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 1343, An Act Concerning Compassionate Care for Victims of Sexual Assault. My name is Carolyn Treiss and I am the Executive Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut. NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut is a grassroots political advocacy organization that uses the political process to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive health choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion.

Let me start by stating this: The only thing this bill has to do with abortion is that it prevents the need for one. I find it fascinating that in hearing on a bill about contraception, we've heard the word abortion more often. I don't know when exactly it happened, but sometime in the past few years, contraception became abortion in the minds and rhetoric of anti-choice organizations. And they've done a good job at confusing the two, particularly in this building. But as you've heard from many distinguished members of the medical community today, the science is clear - abortion and contraception are not the same thing, and Plan B is contraception.

Connecticut's people understand what this issue is really about and are not fooled by the opposition's inaccurate and inflammatory rhetoric. Just like voters in South Dakota and across the nation, they reject these kinds of extreme positions. A May 2006 Quinnipiac Poll found that 78% of voters and 74% of Catholics support "requiring that all Connecticut hospitals, including Catholic hospitals, provide emergency contraception to rape victims." Connecticut's people understand that birth control and pregnancy prevention are areas where both sides of the debate should be able to find common ground, and you should too.

As the Quinnipiac poll demonstrates, Connecticut is a moderate state. Three of our neighboring states, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey, which are similar to us demographically and politically, have all agreed that ensuring rape victims' access to emergency contraception is the right thing to do. Why is this so difficult for us, here in Connecticut in 2007?

I urge you to reject the divisive rhetoric of opponents of this bill. I urge you to reject the junk science upon which their arguments are based. I urge you to respect women and our right to make our own health care decisions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today. I welcome any questions you may have.