

**Shannon R. Lane, MSW**  
**Human Services Committee**  
**March 13, 2007**

**Testimony Re: S.B No. 1343, An Act Concerning Compassionate Care for Victims of Sexual Assault**

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Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and committee members, thank you for your time. My name is Shannon Lane and I am a doctoral student at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and a resident of West Hartford.

I am here to ask you to support SB 1343, concerning compassionate care for victims of sexual assault.

One in every six American women will be assaulted sexually in their lifetime. According to the US Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Study, 191,670 individuals were victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault in 2005.<sup>1</sup> To make those numbers a bit more concrete, in the time that I am talking to you today, two women in the United States will be sexually assaulted.

Eighty percent of rape victims are under the age of 30. That makes young women four times more likely than any other group to be victims of sexual assault. Based on the standard incidences of pregnancy during unprotected sexual intercourse, the best estimate is that over 3,000 women become pregnant every year as a result of rape.<sup>2</sup>

The statistics in this area are impressive, but they're just numbers. The women who are affected are people. The numbers suggest that we all know women who have been victims of sexual assault. The numbers are right. I have two close friends who have been victims of sexual assault. I won't go into any details, to protect their privacy. I ask you to think of them and of all of the other women who are going into the emergency room in the wake of sexual assault. They are not in a position to advocate for themselves. They are not in a position to confront authority. They need to be given the best possible care and every possible support that we have to give them.

Emergency contraception contains the same hormones present in birth control pills. If taken within 72 hours, it can prevent as many as 90% of pregnancies.<sup>3</sup> Several states, including Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey, already require all hospitals to administer emergency contraception.<sup>4</sup> Connecticut should do the same.

Providing emergency contraception to women who come to the emergency room is the least we can do for women who have already been through a terrible experience. I applaud the Committee for making the time for this important issue, and I encourage you to continue to work to make this legislation a reality. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.rainn.org/docs/statistics/ncvs\\_2005.pdf](http://www.rainn.org/docs/statistics/ncvs_2005.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.rainn.org/statistics/pregnancies.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/birth-control-pregnancy/emergency-contraception/overview-4365.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.courant.com/news/opinion/editorials/hc-planb.artjan23,0,5134102.story?coll=hc-headlines-editorials>

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