

*empowering young women  
to lead their best lives possible*

Testimony of  
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The Young Women's Leadership Program  
A Project of the CT General Assembly's  
Permanent Commission on the Status of Women  
Before the  
Human Services Committee  
March 13, 2007

**SB.1343, An Act Concerning Compassionate Care for Victims of Sexual Assault**

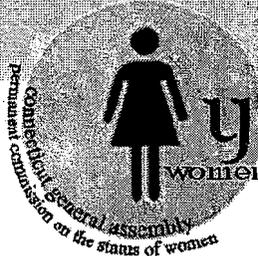
Good afternoon Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Jillian Spies and I am a member of the Young Women's Leadership Program, a project of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

Sexual assault is a regular occurrence in our society that overwhelming impacts the lives of many of Connecticut's young women. As a young woman, I am ever mindful of sexual violence and the threat that such a violation can have on my body and mind. But for my generation and the generations to come, the advent of Emergency contraception as a medical standard of care has given us one less thing to fear from assault-becoming pregnant at the hands of a rapist.

Formerly, I worked as a Sexual Assault Crisis Advocate and currently I am a student with UCONN's Institute for Violence Prevention & Reduction. This work has exposed me to a variety of issues associated with sexual violence. As an advocate, I accompanied victims during hospital exams and spoke with countless survivors via a 24-hour hotline and now as a student, I would like to plan for ways to reduce and prevent sexual violence. Making emergency contraception accessible and available to women at the hospital is an easy fix that the state should institute without debate.

Opponents of SB 1343 argue that rape victims can go elsewhere for Emergency Contraception or that crisis advocates or EMTs should be responsible for informing victims about certain hospitals that will not offer the drug. This line of reasoning doesn't mesh with the realities of rape, because sexual assault happens within a context, and no two assaults are ever the same. What happens to a woman following a rape depends on a variety of things, many of which the state cannot plan for. But, if by chance she enters a Connecticut hospital, then the state should be prepared to have her informed about Emergency Contraception.

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For a large majority of women, being raped means a possibility of getting pregnant. We, as a state, cannot reach out to all victims, but those who enter a hospital should be offered and then receive emergency contraception on site. Emergency Contraception is an accepted medical standard of care and has been FDA approved as a back-up for preventing pregnancy-why wouldn't a hospital offer it?

As a Connecticut lawmaker, you have worked to improve laws that track sexual offenders once they have been released into the community and last year certain lewd sexual acts became a punishable crime. I applaud your efforts and ask that you continue your commitment to protecting women against sexual violence.

When a woman is raped in Connecticut, she should expect that her ER will do everything medically possible to prevent her from experiencing further trauma. Please support SB 1343, and give sexual assault victims the compassionate care that they deserve.