



**From the desk of:
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January 17, 2007

Re: Opposition to Raised Senate Bill No. 126 & Raised House Bill No. 5258

Dear members of the Judiciary Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in writing in opposition of allowing expanded media coverage (cameras in the courtroom) in our state criminal trial proceedings. My name is David Sunshine of Lyme, CT, and I am speaking to you tonight as a survivor of the crime of Homicide.

A good friend of my family and defacto second mother to my two children was brutally murdered on July 1, 2005. A suspect has been arrested and is currently being held on 3.5 million dollars bond awaiting trial for this heinous crime.

I am here to tell you first hand, and through my work with Survivors of Homicide Inc. that there is no greater pain in the world then losing a loved one to violence. The feelings of guilt at not being able to stop the event, combined with the knowledge that the loved ones most dear to you were stolen away through a violent, painful death is something that takes people years to recover from, if they ever do.

Victim attendance at the criminal proceedings of offenders is often something that is necessary for closure in a survivor's life. This experience is often horrifically traumatic, as evidence in the case is graphically presented to the jury for consideration.

The thought of cameras in the courtroom capturing the pain and horror on the faces of victims families while they are viewing evidence related to their loved one's violent death for what is very likely the first time, and then broadcasting those images to every living room in the state is the most barbaric, insensitive encroachment on a victims family's right to be treated with fairness and respect in the judicial process that I can think of.

Victims' families attend these proceedings as part of a healing process and to "see justice done", not to be part of some morbid entertainment for the general public. If allowed, cameras in the court room will likely keep victims families out of the court room altogether, thereby denying them their right to witness the prosecution of those accused of taking their most precious loved ones lives.

If basic societal decency is not enough to deny cameras in the courtroom, then concern for the safety of victims loved one's should be. On the night my friend was murdered, my wife and I went to her house and took her sleeping son out of his bed to bring him to a place where the perpetrator would not find him. I remember holding him close as I descended the stairs thinking, "They killed your mother, but I'll die before I let them kill you". In the hours after her death, we were not sure if the killer only meant to target her, or if they were intent on wiping out all those associated with her. There are other families, especially in gang riddled inner city areas, who fall into this category, and cameras in the courtroom would serve to identify friends, loved ones and associates of victims to those who would wish to do harm to them. This blatantly violates a victim's right to be protected from the accused throughout the criminal justice process, as provided by the Connecticut State Constitution, Article 1, Section 8.

In closing, I respectfully request that cameras not be allowed in criminal proceedings in Connecticut courtrooms. The media already has the right to information from these proceedings, granting the privilege of increased access comes at too high a price to victims families, and may even sway public opinion against victims if they are portrayed in the media as "getting what they deserved" or "having it coming" in an attempt to sensationalize the story to make it more titillating. Our criminal justice system is meant to dispense justice, not provide entertainment. Please keep it that way. Thank you.

Save Sunshine

David Sunshine