

Testimony of Rod O'Connor
In Support of
S.B. No. 445 (RAISED) - An Act Concerning Emergency Health Care
For Sexual Assault Victims.

My friend Anne was raped. Her attacker broke into her apartment in Greenfield, MA while she was sleeping, threatened her life and raped her over a two-hour period. On his way out of her apartment, he threatened to return if she reported the rape to the police.

Anne called the police. She was taken to the local hospital where a rape kit was administered. Counseling was offered. A “morning-after” pill was given to her. She had to go back two weeks later for the first of two HIV tests. Six months later the second HIV test was administered.

Waiting for the HIV tests to come back, twice. Finding out that her attacker was a serial rapist who had raped at least a dozen other women in the Greenfield area. Knowing that her rapist was still on the loose after having threatened her with a return visit. All of this was a lot for Anne to handle. The one certainty she did have was that she was not going to become pregnant as a result of her rape.

I offer this personal story as perspective on how important passage of Senate Bill No. 445 is for rape victims, their families and their friends. That any licensed medical institution would seek to exempt itself from offering this medically necessary and emotionally necessary option for victims of rape is, to me, obscene. To have a victim of rape, during a period of intense shock and stress, have to shop for a medical facility to provide a non-invasive way to prevent a most unwanted pregnancy is barbaric.

Anne has spent years recovering from this one horrific event. In some ways, she was lucky. The complications that could have ruined her life, (HIV disease, pregnancy) were averted because, at her first entry into the medical system, she was offered the best and most professional services including an effective way to prevent an unwanted pregnancy. All women deserve, at least, this amount of care in their time of need.