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**Testimony of James Papillo, State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Monday, February 26, 2007**

Good Afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is James Papillo and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning:

**Raised House Bill No. 7234, An Act Concerning Victim Services (STRONG
OPPOSITION TO SECTION 3)**

The Office of Victim Services (OVS), a Judicial Branch agency, is the state's lead agency dedicated to providing services to victims of crime. OVS offers supportive services, financial assistance and advocacy services as crime victims navigate their way through the criminal justice process.

Crime victims who sustain physical injury and family members of victims of homicide may be eligible for financial assistance through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF). The compensation program is a payer of last resort, providing eligible crime victims and their families with financial assistance for un-reimbursed expenses associated with medical costs, mental health expenses, lost wages, lost wages to attend court proceedings in homicide cases, funeral expenses and loss of support. The CICF is there for crime victims to cover only those expenses not covered by insurance or other similar resources. The compensation program provides no reimbursement property loss, property damage or pain and suffering.

OVS receives state and federal funding to compensate eligible persons for un-reimbursed crime related expenses. Personal injury-related claims may not exceed \$15,000 and homicide-related claims may not be compensated in excess of \$25,000. Between October 1, 2003 and September 30, 2005, OVS reported 2,293 claims that were received and, of those, 1,684 were approved. The CICF needs more dollars, not more restrictions on the reimbursement of expenses, to provide adequate financial support to Connecticut crime victims.

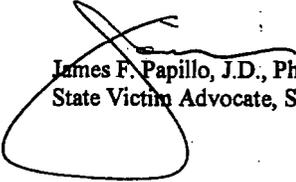
The proposal to reduce the level of coverage for expenses, as proffered by the Judicial Branch in Section 3 of the Bill, appears to conflict with the express goals of the OVS regarding victim compensation:

“The breadth of services offered by OVS is unmatched in the state of Connecticut. The needs of crime victims are continually changing, and our dedication to providing effective, efficient, and appropriate services to crime victims reflects this commitment. OVS continues to be dedicated to meeting,

directly or indirectly, the myriad needs of Connecticut's victims of crime." (The Office of Victim Services, State of Connecticut Judicial Branch: Biennial Activities Report, October 1, 2003-September 30, 2005, p. 3)

The Office of the Victim Advocate strongly opposes any effort to reduce or restrict the compensation program that is currently available to crime victims. I respectfully request that the committee reject Section 3 of Raised House Bill No. 7234 and not re-victimized crime victims in this way.

Thank you for considering my testimony.



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