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**Testimony of James Papillo, State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Tuesday, April 10, 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 in **SUPPORT** of:

Senate Bill No. 903, *An Act Concerning Lost or Stolen Firearms*

Senate Bill No. 904, *An Act Requiring Firearm Dealers to Report Lost or Stolen Firearms*

House Bill No. 6901, *An Act to Fight Violent Crime Arising From Lost or Stolen Firearms*

House Bill No. 7383, *An Act Concerning Persistent Firearms Offenders*

Many firearm safety measures, such as trigger locks and proper storage of firearms and ammunition, have been established to protect, not only the owner of the firearm, but also the general public. The requirement in Senate Bill No. 903 and House Bill No. 6901 will provide law enforcement with critical information to better assist in the investigation of crimes involving the use of firearms. This, in my view, translates into greater public and victim safety.

I am, however, somewhat perplexed as to the *seventy-two hour* reporting requirement. When a victim of identity theft discovers that his/her credit cards have been stolen, the victim is strongly encouraged to report the theft **IMMEDIATELY** to the issuing credit card company and others so that immediate action can be taken to minimize the risk that such stolen credit cards will be used illegally. To better protect public and victim safety, it is my opinion that the time to report lost or stolen firearms should be shorter. The sooner such reporting is made to law enforcement officials, the sooner an investigation into a theft can begin. Earlier reporting could serve to enhance the preventing of a serious crime (involving stolen weapons) from occurring.

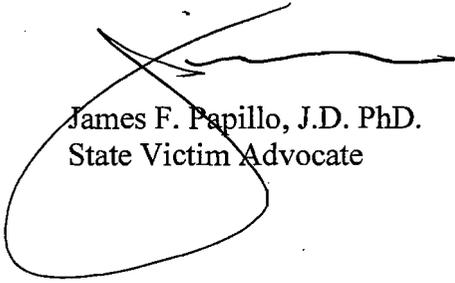
In addition, holding persons accountable for what happens to their firearms is one of the keys to slowing the flow of guns into the hands of people who should not have them (e.g., convicted felons). Persons who choose to possess a firearm must understand and accept greater responsibility of ownership.

Likewise, Senate Bill No. 904 requires any person who holds a permit to sell at retail a pistol or revolver or a federally-licensed firearm dealer to report the theft or loss of any firearm in such person's inventory to law enforcement, again, not later than

seventy-two hours after such person knew or should have known of such theft or loss. According to a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (BATF) report on firearms commerce, 6% of licensed gun stores and 10% of pawnshops that sell firearms reported having a least one firearm stolen from their place of business in 1998.¹ Further, BATF reported that of the 1,895 gun trafficking investigations, 209 involved firearms stolen from licensed firearms dealers.² These investigations uncovered 6,084 stolen firearms. The reporting requirement of licensed gun dealers should be as soon as practical in order for law enforcement to effectively investigate and possibly prevent a more serious crime from occurring.

House Bill No. 7383 will provide for enhanced penalties for repeat firearm offenders. I strongly urge the Committee to support this important proposal and provide the state's attorneys in Connecticut with the tools to aggressively pursue repeat firearm offenders.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I strongly urge the Committee to support these important proposals.



James F. Papillo, J.D. PhD.
State Victim Advocate

¹ Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, "Operation Snapshot: An analysis of the Retail Regulated Firearms Industry."

² BATF, "Following the Gun: Enforcing Federal Laws Against Firearms Traffickers," June 2000.