



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

OFFICE OF CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER
30 TRINITY STREET-4th Floor
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

DEBORAH DEL PRETE SULLIVAN
LEGAL COUNSEL/EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER
(860) 509-6405 Telephone
(860) 509-6495 Fax
deborah.d.sullivan@jud.ct.gov

**Testimony of
Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel
Office of Chief Public Defender**

***Raised Bill No. 1457*
An Act Concerning Consensual Sexual Activity Between
Adolescents Close in Age to Each Other**

**Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
April 4, 2007**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports *Raised Bill No. 1457, An Act Concerning Consensual Sexual Activity Between Adolescents Close in Age to Each Other*. This proposed legislation would expand from two to three years the difference in ages that may exist between a teenager who is fourteen or fifteen who engages in consensual sexual activity with another teenager. The proposal does not change existing law as to the prosecution of older predators that would engage in any sexual activity with a teenager aged fourteen or fifteen.

The increase in the age difference would decrease the number of teenagers, both male and female, who are charged with a sexual offense for engaging in consensual sexual activity with another teenager. Lives can be ruined by the stigma that attaches when convicted of a felony that carries a minimum mandatory sentence of nine months, possibility of registry requirements on the sex offender registry and the label of a sex offender because a teenager had consensual sexual activity with another teenager.

Currently, a teenager who is over 16 years of age and just 24 months and a day older than his/her partner who is under 16 years of age, and who has engaged in consensual sexual activity, can be convicted for what is commonly referred to as statutory rape. In a case where the young man is incarcerated for this offense and if he impregnated his younger

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partner, the impact can be devastating upon not only him and his partner, but also the child born to them. Such an impact can exist throughout their lives. Both males and females can find themselves in a circumstance such as this.

While many, if not most people, would disapprove of sexual activity among teenagers, the reality is that there are teenagers that are having consensual sexual activity. This conduct can occur in the inner cities and in suburban communities. Why should teenagers so close in age that are engaging in consensual activity be punished and stigmatized, basically for life, with a conviction and possibly labeled as a sexual offender? Therefore, the Office of Chief Public Defender requests this Committee to support this proposal.