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TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MARCH 20, 2008

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 35, An Act Concerning the Registration of Sexual Offenders.

The proposal establishes a three tiered classification system for Connecticut's Sex Offender Registry based on severity of offense. These gradations have been used in other states and provide both law enforcement officials and the public with a better understanding of the nature of the sex offender and the likelihood of recidivism.

Senate Bill 35 makes changes in a number of statutes to comply with new requirements of the federal Adam Walsh Act to be eligible for certain federal grants. These changes include lengthening the term of some registration requirements and expanding the information provided to law enforcement.

I recommend against the provision of this bill that includes my office on the Risk Assessment Board. Currently, the Office of the Attorney General provides legal advice to the Board as a state agency. It should remain as currently constituted, with my office providing legal advice.

Finally, the proposal also requires disclosure of new information to the Connecticut State Police, including the employer of a registered sex offender. Recently, the Freedom of Information Commission has found such information to be a public record, accessible to anyone upon request, even if the information is not on the registry. The committee should carefully consider whether such information should be disclosed to the state and, if so, clarify whether the information is a public record or confidential.

Similarly, section 12 of the proposal contains a list of information that cannot be shared by law enforcement with others. The committee should carefully consider what information should be available to the public.

Thank you.