JAMES A. AMANN
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Thursday, March 20th, 2008
Testimony by House Speaker James Amann
Before the Judiciary Committee
in SUPPORT of

SENATE BILL NO. 699 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OF CHILDREN

"Last year's legislation, like this year's, was informed by expert input from victim advocate groups and state prosecutors."

Good morning chairmen and members of the committee.

The Connecticut General Assembly became a leader almost fifteen years ago when it was one of the first states in the nation to enact Megan's Law registration provisions. Over the years, the General Assembly has continued to improve offender registration provisions, enhanced penalties on sex offenders, and increased funding for the treatment of abused children.

Most recently, a bipartisan coalition of members of this committee from both chambers came together to bring Megan's Law registration provisions into cyberspace, and to adopt well thought out Jessica's Law sentencing provisions.

Last session's Jessica's Law provisions, among other things, established a new crime of aggravated sexual assault of a minor, enhanced the penalty for enticing children, and imposed new mandatory minimums. Last year's legislation, like this year's, was informed by expert input from victim advocate groups and state prosecutors.

Predators facing longer prison terms, as a result of enhanced sentencing, are more likely to take their cases all the way to a jury trial. As this happens, the legislature must do whatever it can to minimize the secondary trauma experienced by children.

With this goal in mind, this bill amends the state's sequestration rules for children and the state's tender year's exception to hearsay rules. It also

prioritizes the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases. It is my hope that these measures will decrease the amount of time it takes for child abuse cases to be investigated and adjudicated and will support child victims during this process.

We must do whatever we can to protect our children. As this measure moves forward, I look forward to working with this committee and with all other stakeholders to address any concerns that you may have.