



Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

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Testimony of Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

Support: HB 5541 *An Act Concerning Sexual Assault Of Persons Placed Or Treated Under The Direction Of The Commissioner Of Developmental Services*
Laura Cordes, Director of Policy and Advocacy
Submitted to the Public Health Committee
Public Hearing, March 12, 2008

Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Laura Cordes, and I am the Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc (CONNSACS) and a long standing member of the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations.

CONNSACS is the statewide association of nine community-based rape crisis centers in Connecticut. Our mission is to end sexual violence and ensure high quality, comprehensive and culturally competent sexual assault victim services.

During fiscal year 2006-2007 CONNSACS' community-based program staff and volunteers provided services to 4,326 sexual assault victims and their families. Our member centers also provided risk reduction and prevention education to nearly 34,000 children and youth and to over 5,000 members of the general public and training for close to 2,500 professionals, including law enforcement personnel.

We fully support HB 5541 *An Act Concerning Sexual Assault Of Persons Placed Or Treated Under The Direction Of The Commissioner Of Developmental Services*

which expands the sex crimes statutes to include sexual assaults committed on persons placed or treated under the direction of the Commissioner of Developmental Services.

Persons with developmental disabilities are at high risk for sexual abuse. They are a vulnerable population upon which sex offenders often prey. 16% of the clients we served during the last fiscal year were persons with disabilities including developmental disabilities.

Connecticut must ensure that persons who must depend on others for their care are free from sexual abuse, coercion and exploitation. This bill helps to hold accountable those who would harm vulnerable persons in their care.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding our position or services. Please feel free to contact me online (laura@connsacs.org) or by phone (860.508.7367).