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**Testimony of Sylvia Cancela
Public Member of the Psychiatric Security Review Board
Before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
January, 2009**

Good morning Representative Janowski, Representative Schofield and distinguished members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee.

My name is Sylvia Cancela and I am currently the Public Member of the Psychiatric Security Review Board. I want to thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee today as Governor Rell's nominee for reappointment to the Board.

In 1995, when I was first asked to serve on the PSRB, I was intrigued by the Board's mission – to preside over persons who are found not guilty of a crime by reason of insanity – and more important, to determine the level of treatment, supervision and placement required in order to ensure that acquittees do not pose a danger to themselves, their victims or the community.

I had been involved with issues of disability and ability for many years when I came to the PSRB. I have degrees in Psychology and Sociology and spent 7 years in the corporate arena, partnering with organizations to develop products, services and promotion for individuals with disabilities.

PSRB acquittees pose an additional challenge as their disabilities have caused them to harm themselves, others and their communities. That's where the unique combination of expertise and depth of experience on the Board is so critical to finding the best solutions for everyone involved through education, medication and if possible, accommodation.

The Board is so careful to balance issues of public safety and victim concerns when considering acquittees' re-integration into the community. This has resulted in a public safety record where PSRB acquittees have the lowest recidivism rate of any criminal population in the State of Connecticut.

I am proud to serve on the Psychiatric Security Review Board. Each member of the Board respects and appreciates the significant public trust that has been placed in us to ensure the safety of the citizens of Connecticut. Although the work is time consuming and deals with the most tragic of circumstances, I look forward to reappointment to the Board and the opportunity to continue to serve with its superb administrative team.

Thank you for allowing me to address the Committee today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time concerning my background or my work with the Psychiatric Security Review Board.