

**Judiciary Committee  
Public Hearing Testimony**

**Committee Bill Number 6009, AN ACT CONCERNING THE FAILURE OF A WITNESS TO  
REPORT A SERIOUS CRIME.**

**March 16, 2009**

Good afternoon Chairmen McDonald and Lawlor, Ranking Members Kissel and O'Neill, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Dawn Titus and I am here to testify in support of **Committee Bill Number 6009**. The man who raped my daughter, Scott Shefelbine pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 25 years in prison.

*The following is the statement I read to the Court during his sentencing-*

How do you begin to express the damage this rapist has done to your only beautiful daughter. Scott Shefelbine was arrested and charged with 11 felonies for his conduct with our daughter. These charges consisted of five counts of sexual assault in the first degree, kidnapping, unlawful restraint, and others. Eleven felonies. He stalked her, terrorized her, and made her life a living hell.

From the time our daughter was little girl she had her dad's huge smile. She always had a trusting heart and the sweetest spirit ever. When my husband and I would go to parent-teacher conferences we were always told that our daughter would be there first one to go over and help another child in need.

Now our daughter doesn't trust people. She actually pushes people away, including her family members, until she is certain she will not be hurt. She had a terrible time going sleep and then staying asleep. Many nights her dad and I spent staying up with her holding her while she cried listening to her talk about the nightmares. The damage done by Scott Shefelbine is very deep.

In 2005 our daughter was an 18 year old high school senior with big dreams. She was going to become a special education teacher working with children with learning disabilities, or she was going to pursue a career in law enforcement somehow focusing on helping children. Then her world came crashing down when her dad was diagnosed with cancer. She has always been Daddy's Girl, the sparkle in her dad's eye. She was devastated by his diagnosis, along with the rest of our family. Our family has always been very close. During this awful time for our family Scott Shefelbine took full advantage our daughter. Scott Shefelbine lied to our daughter from the very moment he met her. First he was a teacher at Ellington High School, and then he was a teacher at Tolland High School. Scott Shefelbine used lies and deceit to develop a friendship with our daughter at a time when she was at her most vulnerable. Our daughter felt she was

developing a friendship with a man close to her age that had a responsible job and wanted to help her through a very difficult time. Instead he exploited this friendship and began to physically and sexually assault her. Scott Shefelbine used our daughter's fear that her father was going to die to further isolate her from her family. Scott Shefelbine threatened to hurt other members of her family if she told anyone. Scott Shefelbine terrorized our daughter at a time when she was at her most vulnerable. Our daughter stopped being the person we knew and became withdrawn, unable to eat, unable to sleep. At first I attributed it to her dad's illness, but I knew something was terribly wrong. When I finally found out what had happened to our daughter I encouraged her to report these awful crimes. It took a lot of encouragement and support to get her to a place where she could talk about the unthinkable things that Scott Shefelbine had done to her. It took amazing courage and strength at a time when she was trying to support her dad through his illness, but she did it. She reported all the awful details and that is why we are here today to see this case to the end.

Since Mr. Shefelbine's arrest our family has been the target of many bizarre events such as being forced off the road. Is Mr. Shefelbine connected to these events, we cannot say for sure, but whoever is responsible, we are no longer afraid.

Our daughter is very angry that Scott Shefelbine is not pleading guilty to every charge in this file including sexual assault in the first degree and kidnapping, but she will accept what the State's Attorney's Office has done with this plea agreement. As a result of this plea agreement, Scott Shefelbine cannot hurt anyone else and she will not have to think about him for many, many, years. Our daughter and Scott Shefelbine both know every detail of what he did to her and although she has to live it, he also must live with this knowledge until he dies.

Our daughter does not look at these events with Scott Shefelbine as the worst thing that has ever happened to her. In October of 2007 my husband lost his battle with cancer and passed away. There can be nothing worse than holding my husband's hand and telling him it's OK to let go and then looking over at the faces of our children as they watched their dad take his last breath. He fought with everything he had. The last conversation I had with my husband was about our daughter and about this case. He made me promise to do what it took to get justice. Scott Shefelbine had hurt his little girl and he wanted to be sure that he paid for that. He wasn't just a dad he was Daddy to his little girl and a best friend to his sons and a soul mate to me.

Our daughter is definitely a changed person; she will never be the same. When her dad died she felt that no one could protect her anymore. What she has realized in time is that her brothers and I will protect her and always be there for her. No one will ever hurt her like this again. What Scott Shefelbine did to her will take years to come to terms with, but she has already been through more than what most adults go through in their entire lifetime. She is a survivor.

I also have to address Gail Shefelbine. Our daughter begged her for help and Gail Shefelbine ignored her pleas for help. How do you call yourself a mother? I am going to begin working with the state legislature to try to change the law in Connecticut so that under similar circumstances there will be a duty to act.

As a mother-

Would I do anything to protect my children- Absolutely

Would I be there for them if they were in trouble- Absolutely

Would I guide them on the right road for that problem- Absolutely

Would I love them unconditionally- Absolutely

Would I keep bailing them out if numerous victims claimed similar crimes and there was evidence to support it- Absolutely not

My husband and I taught our children from a very young age that if you do something wrong, tell us. It doesn't mean that you won't be in trouble, but it will be easier. We taught them that if you make a mistake, admit it and face it.

Don't we as mothers teach our children not to touch a hot stove because you will be burned. Well Scott kept telling his parents to grab the stove and they kept right on grabbing it. Too bad Scott Shefelbine's parents didn't teach him to respect others and to take responsibility for his actions, even as an adult he couldn't do this. It would have saved a lot of girls' lives from being devastated.

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