

Please Support : SB 646  
An Act Excluding Sexual Assault And Other Violent Crime Victims  
From Jury Service In Certain Criminal Cases

Testimony of Caryn Lacedonia, Uconn School of Social Work Student  
Judiciary Committee, March 26, 2009

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Caryn Lacedonia and I am an MSW student at the UCONN School of Social Work. I submit this testimony in support of SB 646, *An Act Excluding Sexual Assault And Other Violent Crime Victims From Jury Service In Certain Criminal Cases*.

Jury duty is an obligation for almost every American. As a Connecticut resident I view a call to jury service as a right and privilege that I have the honor of partaking in.

However, there are certain populations and circumstances in which serving as a juror can be detrimental to an individual's mental health. Victims of sexual assault can relive trauma when serving on a jury in which the defendant is accused of particular violent crimes.

A 2001 study by Zollner, Sacs, and Foa, found that memory for the fears that sexual assault victims feel do not lessen with time. These findings indicate that sexual assault victims could be negatively affected by participating on a jury in which the defendant is accused of a violent crime. Sexual assault victims should not be unnecessarily retraumatized by experiencing a similar crime as a member of a jury.

By allowing a victim of sexual assault or other violent crime to identify themselves as such, the victim is then able to utilize self-determination. This in essence, will give the victim of such a crime the ability to determine whether or not participating in jury service of particular criminal cases as having a detrimental effect on their recovery process or possibly cause unnecessary psychological trauma.

In closing, I urge your support of SB 646. Connecticut has a long history of supporting the rights of vulnerable and oppressed populations. Please do the same for victims of sexual assault.