

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCATE
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State Victim Advocate

**Testimony of Michelle Cruz, State Victim Advocate
Before the Public Safety and Security Committee
Tuesday, February 10, 2009**

Good morning Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. For the record, my name is Michelle Cruz and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of:

Raised House Bill No. 6326, *An Act Designating September as Public Safety Awareness Month*

Raised House Bill No. 6357, *An Act Creating the Offense of Cyberstalking*

Raised House Bill No. 6359, *An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State and Appropriating Funds for the Prevention of Violent Crime*

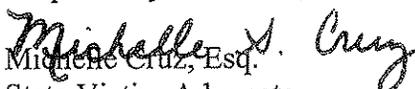
One of the many responsibilities of the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) is to conduct programs of public education and outreach to the community as well as to agencies and other entities that touch the lives of crime victims. To that end, the OVA has visited many colleges and universities; non-profit community organizations; various criminal justice agencies and others to inform them about the rights of crime victims and the services that are available to crime victims in the state of Connecticut.

In July of 2008, the OVA met with representatives of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to discuss the planning of a statewide public safety awareness event. Our vision for this event is to work in collaboration with DPS and other agencies to provide the public with safety planning and information, crime prevention tips, resources and services, demonstrations and would include a road race. The event would be centrally located in an effort to reach as many citizens of the state as possible. Raised House Bill No. 6326 would support this effort by providing the timing and attention of designating September as Public Safety Awareness Month for a successful event. Additionally, Raised House Bill No. 6359 would make grant money available to conduct specific educational programs of crime prevention at the event.

Raised House Bill No. 6357 would create a criminal offense of cyberstalking. Many crime victims have reported this serious problem to the OVA. As advancements in technology progress, so to must the laws so that innocent people are not subjected to technology driven threats and harassment. Stalking is intended to intimidate, control and scare a victim; the affects suffered by a victim are no less because of the manner in which the stalking occurs. I strongly urge the committee to support this important proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of these important proposals.

Respectfully submitted,


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