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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE
CT STATE LEGISLATURE
MAR. 3, 2009

Good morning. My name is Dr. Samuel L Rieger, President of the Melanie Ilene Rieger Memorial Foundation and Past President of Survivors of Homicide. Our beautiful 19 year old daughter Melanie was strangled to death in our Waterbury home on May 24, 1994. Needless to say, this horrific tragedy has changed our lives forever. We cannot fathom what families like The Smolinski's have to deal with in not knowing what has happened to their loved ones. My wife Wanda and I are appalled at the treatment The Smolinski Family has received from law enforcement agencies in CT. It is as if they are the felons in this case. Jan has been treated as a common criminal having been arrested, fingerprinted, sued in civil court and forced to hire an attorney in her defense.

The most important factor in missing persons cases, is to begin looking as soon as the report is made. Marc Klaas, a good friend and father of Polly, has campaigned throughout the U.S. for immediate notification and search in missing person cases. In the MaryAnn Measles case in New Milford, Police assumed she had run away. Instead, she was brutally tortured and it took 9 months for her badly tortured and decomposed body to appear. As time passes, the odds of finding these people alive diminishes exponentially.

Secondly, ,we must use whatever technology is available to help in the

identification of missing persons. DNA evidence must be entered into national databases such as CODIS and NamUs. It is unconscionable that authorities are not using these important technology tools to help solve missing persons cases. We must be able to provide resolution to the families who have waited so long to find out what has happened to their loved ones.

Thirdly, this data can be used in identification of the persons who caused the deaths of these missing persons. Some may be serial killers who will continue taking innocent lives.

I would suggest that many of you attend the 13th Annual Melanie Ilene Rieger Memorial Conference Against Violence to be held at the DOC Maloney Center in Cheshire on May 13th and 14th. This nationally known conference will feature such speakers as The DC Sniper's Wife Mildred Muhammed and Marc Klaas as well as George Adams, an expert on the NamUs system. George Adams is currently the program coordinator for the University of North Texas Center for Human Identification and provides training and case support for criminal justice agencies. Details can be found on our

Website: www.melanieriegerconference.com

In conclusion, I would strongly urge your passage of this bill so that wonderful families such as The Smolinski's may have an increased possibility of finally knowing what happened to their beloved son Billy. The Smolinski's

have dedicated their lives to supporting and implementing these new technologies across the country so that the over 150,000 missing and 60,000 unidentified dead may finally be found and/or identified. We must utilize latest technology so that we may resolve these unsolved missing person cases. Thank you.