

3/26/09

Bill #05070
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Hello, I would like to thank the chairman and this committee for taking the time to read my written testimony. My name is Danielle Rea, 18 Pearl Street, Milford, CT. As president of Survivors of Homicide, Inc., I am writing in favor of bill #05070, An Act Concerning Habeas Corpus Reform. There are currently 1,500 Habeas Corpus cases at this time on the dockets in the Rockville Court. Our founding fathers had the foresight to include a provision for Habeas Corpus appeals for people convicted of a crime and feel they have been wrongly imprisoned, but there are many frivolous habeas cases brought before the court, which becomes a living nightmare for the families of homicide victims and it is a burden on our judicial system. While the victim of crime and their families are adjusting to the after life of experiencing a trial and feel the court proceedings are over, they are notified that their case will be appealed using this provision. There are many states that have time limitations on Habeas appeals and I feel that Connecticut needs to put limitations in place to stop criminals from abusing the Habeas Corpus Appeals process. Our challenge is to create a balance of justice, which would eliminate the abuse of the Habeas Corpus appeals.

I would like to share with this committee that my brother Ronald Todd Fearnley was murdered on November 7, 1991 in Houston, TX. His murderer has already had three parole hearings and has been denied each time. I am grateful, I personally have not had to deal with a Habeas Corpus appeal in my brother Todd's case but I have experienced

members from Survivors of Homicide, Inc. having to go back to court for a Habeas Corpus appeal. I can share with this committee that this is a living nightmare for these families to receive notification years afterward informing them that they need to go back to court, face the perpetrator and to hear all of the evidence all over again. I feel that the perpetrators are also intentionally doing this in some cases knowing that this will continue to re-victimize the crime victim and their families. As a state we need to recognize the rights of the victims of crime.

In closing, I would like to share with this committee that I am in support of Bill # 05070 and I would like to say, "if legislation is not passed on this bill that the our judicial system will continue to be abused with frivolous Habeas Corpus appeals."