

Testimony in Support of SB 847 AAC Sexual Violence on College Campuses

Nick Rossetti, Quinnipiac University Student

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

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Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and honorable members of the Committee, my name is Nick Rossetti and I am writing this letter to urge all those involved to pass SB 847. I am currently finishing up my senior year at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT, and this year I was elected as one of the Vice Presidents of the student body with a focus on becoming aware of and resolving students' problems on our campus. Through the past four years I've kept my eyes and ears open, by nature of my job I've become very in touch with what students my age are faced with. I'm sorry that I cannot offer the statistical evidence that other testimony provides, indeed all that I have to provide is merely anecdotal evidence but I'm hoping you will see my point and understand the need for this legislature.

Shortly after I was elected I was approached by a close female friend of mine at a social gathering. She pulled me aside to tell me the story of her best friend who was raped by another student, but what was even more horrifying than the events that transpired was how the scenario came to a conclusion. To put it quite simply, no one believed she was raped and the perpetrator received no punishment from the university. You must understand the courage it takes for a survivor to come forward and begin judicial proceedings, many do not get past this step alone and most keep these incidents to themselves. Next, the survivor is further traumatized by having to relive the events as she is describing them. After all is said and done, the victim is left with no justice and no peace. My friend begged me to do whatever I could to make sure that crimes of this nature do not come to pass so easily in our community. I've been fighting tooth and nail to change our handbook to be more concerned with the rights of survivors rather than perpetrators, I'm working with different organizations to program events to shed light on matters like these that feed on silence, to empower survivors to speak out and to know who is there to give them the help they need. No matter what I dream or who I work with to make a tangible impact on my campus I am still a nobody, but it is YOU who has the power to make the greatest change, and now it is you that I beg in humility to understand that the problem we all face is greater than any of us can imagine. I'm here fighting on the ground level, and incidents like these will continue at the same tragic rates unless action is taken and justice is provided for.

I don't know the words to write that may help convince you, I only know what I have seen and heard throughout the duration of my time spent in college. I must beg you one last time, for the sake of all those who are too scared to seek justice, for the greater likelihood that these events are approached and handled appropriately, for all those sisters and daughters who struggle day by day to make sense of it all, uphold SB 847 and its provisions. Please don't turn your back on the constituents that need you the most.

Thank you.

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