

Testimony of Tea Pšorn
In Support of SB 847 *An Act Concerning the Elimination of Sexual Violence on College Campuses*
February 10, 2011

Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, I am writing a testimony in support of SB 847 *An Act Concerning the Elimination of Sexual Violence on College Campuses*. My name is Tea Pšorn, and I am a junior at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT. Because of my status as a student, but also as a Resident Assistant and an employee of the Women's Center on campus, I find that it is imperative that the policies related to sexual assault (SA) and intimate partner violence (IPV) be implemented in all campuses in the State of Connecticut. Universities should be held liable by guaranteeing that these policies be disclosed each year in the institutions uniform campus crime report.

As an employee of the Women's Center, I have personally come in contact with individuals that have been victims of SA and IPV. Just by knowing the contact information for campus, local advocacy, counseling, health, mental health and legal assistance services, and written information concerning the rights of such students, can make a world of difference to the survivor. Being aware of the options available to them, survivors of SA and IPV regain some sense of autonomy, self-worth, and overall safety. Furthermore, I cannot stress enough just how critical it is that all incoming students and campus employees go through primary prevention and awareness programs. As an RA, not having the training or the necessary knowledge to help a survivor is simply out of the question. As 60% of completed rapes occur in the victim's dorm room,¹ as an RA, simply by not knowing the option a resident has in terms of housing arrangements, in case the accused should live on the same floor or in same building, could possible deter a survivor from seeking the proper assistance and reporting the act of violence to enforcement authorities.

Through my various student leadership roles, I have become aware of some of the grim statistics pertaining to the high rates of sexual violence on college campuses. One in five women will experience rape or attempted rape in their 4-yr college career², and fewer than 5% of college women reported their rapes or attempted rapes to law enforcement.³ Most survivors of SA are full-time student, and approximately 1/3 of them are first year students age 17-19.⁴ Unfortunately, 48.8% of college women who were victims of attack that met the study's definition of rape did not consider what happened to them rape.⁵ By providing trainings to incoming students and campus employees, they will be aware of the definition of consent and information pertaining to reporting, bystander intervention, and risk reduction. Having the knowledge and accessibility to such resources, those statistics will decrease! By not addressing such statistics properly and seeking policies to be implemented, the State of Connecticut is doing a great disservice to its citizens.

I urge the committee to support the policies and procedures related to sexual assault and intimate partner violence for all universities and pass SB 847 *An Act Concerning the Elimination of Sexual Violence on College Campuses*. Thank you.

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¹ Bonnie S. Fisher, Francis T. Cullen & Michael G. Turner, *The Sexual Victimization of College Women*, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics 10 (Dec. 2000).

² Fisher, 2000.

³ Fisher, 2000.

⁴ New York University. "National Statistics about Sexual Violence on College Campuses," Visited on February 9, 2011. Address: <http://www.nyu.edu/shc/promotion/svstat.html>.

⁵ Bureau of Justice Statistics. "*Sexual Victimization of Collegiate Women*" 2000, US DOJ.