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Testimony of: Joseph Sikora

In support of: Raised Bill No. 6643

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

April 4, 2011

Members of the Committee, my name is Joseph Sikora and I am currently the Director of Security for the Hartford Public Schools. I am testifying today in support of Raised Bill Number 6643, An Act Concerning Residency Restrictions for Certain Registered Sexual Offenders. This bill would limit the ability of convicted sex offenders whose victims were under the age of sixteen to reside within 2,000 feet of the real property comprising a public or private elementary or secondary school or a facility providing day care services.

The City of Hartford has approximately 11% of the total number of convicted sex offenders in the state of Connecticut. Between September 2009 and June 2010, our school district received approximately 472 notifications of sex offenders residing in our city, with 253 of them being convicted of crimes against minors. From July 2010 to January 2011, our district received approximately 292 notifications with 167 of these sex offender convictions having a minor as a victim. Both numbers indicate more than half of these offenders have been convicted of crimes against children.

Recidivism rates of sex offenders against children have been reported anywhere from 10 to 40 percent according to a study done by the Center for Sex Offender Management. We have an obligation to protect our children as they travel to and from school, while they attend classes, and during after school activities. This legislation will help curtail the opportunity for interaction with and exposure to our youth for those sex offenders who have been convicted of a crime against a child.

We must take all the appropriate steps to provide a safe and healthy environment in and around our schools. This bill offers another layer of protection for children residing in the City of Hartford and every other city and town in the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding this extremely important issue, and I strongly encourage your support for Raised Bill No. 6643.

Joseph Sikora
Director of Security
Hartford Public Schools

"Providing a Safe and Healthy Learning Environment for Hartford Schools"