

Good morning, distinguished Senators and Representatives of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Milly Arciniegas, the president of the Hartford Parent Organization Council (a coalition of 48 PTO's throughout the city of Hartford Public Schools). I am here today in support of proposed bill 6643 (an act concerning residency restrictions for certain registered sexual offenders).

Last year, when a similar bill was proposed to this committee I brought my son with me to testify on this important issue. Because it is he who has to endure walking to and from school everyday surrounded by sex offenders. It is a shame that he not only has to look both ways when crossing the street, but he also needs to be aware of where these sex offenders live.

As I see him go off in the morning, my heart begins to pound just like his. I remind him to be aware and be careful. He tells me, "Mom do not worry, I will be o.k." I trust my son will do his best to be aware as much as possible, but I know there will be a day where he will not be as vigilant and there is a chance where something my happen to him.

You see, that chance that something may happen, in Hartford our chances are greater and it doesn't need to be. With this proposed bill we have an opportunity to make it better and safer for our children to walk to and from school and lower the risk for the entire state.

Having sex offenders reside within two thousand feet of a public or private elementary or secondary school or facility providing child day care services will not only makes it safer for our children, but also will reduce the amount of incidental contact sexual offenders and sexual predators have with children.

From a parent prospective, if there is anyway for us to make sure our children are safer we will go the extra mile. For some parents it means driving or walking their children to school everyday even if they are 500 feet away from the school. For some parents it means purchasing a cell phone for their children to ensure their children arrived to school safely. But what about those parents who have to go to work or cannot afford to purchase cell phones for their children, what happens to their children. I know what happens to them; they walk to and from school alone and have a greater chance of something happening to them.

Other states have taken a stand on this issue and it is time we take a stand in Connecticut. Our children should be protected by whatever means possible. They are worth it.

Thank you for your time.