

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

My name is Jacqueline Martone, and I am testifying in support of SB 847, *An Act Concerning the Elimination of Sexual Violence on College Campuses*. I am a senior at the University of Connecticut, majoring in Women's Studies, and a resident of Cheshire, CT. As a Planned Parenthood of Southern New England Campus Action Intern and an employee of the UConn Women's Center, I can attest to the importance of this bill's passage. There are many issues facing those on college campuses, and protection against sexual violence must be a top priority.

Many people, when they hear that one in four college women will be the victim of sexual assault during their college career<sup>i</sup>, are in disbelief. I was even told once that this fact only pertains to "certain campuses". The fact of the matter is that every individual, on every campus, is prone to sexual violence. I am fortunate enough to have been a Peer Educator in UConn's Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP), a class where students learn about the prevention of sexual violence, as well as facilitate discussions with peers, staff, and community. During my time, I had many experiences where my fellow peers had great difficulty understanding that sexual encounters without consent constitute rape or assault. What was most striking during my facilitations was the fact that there was still an enormous amount of victim blaming. Our society has condoned for too long the behavior of perpetrators by blaming victims for the way they dress, how they behave, and their safety practices. Instead, society should be saying that there is no excuse for sexual violence and defending survivors of this heinous crime.

This bill is important for many reasons, but I believe it will most benefit survivors. It implements many services and protections that cater to them, including providing them with necessary and related services, upholding and implementing restraining orders, and beginning hearings at their request. Another imperative piece of this legislation is the focus on the prevention of sexual violence. It includes sexual assault and intimate partner violence primary prevention and awareness programming to all incoming students and new employees, as well as ongoing campaigns to promote awareness of the issue. With more knowledge of this issue on campus, it is likely that those on campus will become better educated on the issue, and even become empowered bystanders in situations that they encounter.

It is clear that this subject is of vital significance to the safety of anyone on a college campus. It is simply not acceptable when 48.8% of college women who were victims of attacks that met the study's definition of rape did not consider what happened to them rape<sup>ii</sup>, or one in twelve college men admitted to committing acts that met the legal definition of rape<sup>iii</sup>, and that every 21 hours, there is another rape on an American college campus<sup>iv</sup>. Sexual violence on college campuses is a

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<sup>i</sup> Hirsch, Kathleen (1990) "Fraternalities of Fear: Gang Rape, Male Bonding, and the Silencing of Women." Ms., 1(2) 52-56.

<sup>ii</sup> Bureau of Justice Stats. "Sexual Victimization of Collegiate Women" 2000, US DOJ.

<sup>iii</sup> [www.nyu.edu/shc/promotion/scstat.html](http://www.nyu.edu/shc/promotion/scstat.html)

<sup>iv</sup> [www.crisisconnection.org/sexualassault/college\\_campuses\\_and\\_rape.htm](http://www.crisisconnection.org/sexualassault/college_campuses_and_rape.htm)

crisis, but legislation such as this will help to put an end to it. I urge you to support this important bill and know that if it passes, it will help begin a new era of true prevention on this crucial topic. Thank you.

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