



Testimony of Kimberly Shellman
In Support of HB 6633 AN ACT CONCERNING
STALKING
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing, March 30, 2011

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Kimberly Shellman. I am the Assistant Director for the New Britain and Hartford Sexual Assault Crisis Service, a program of the YWCA New Britain. I am writing in full support of HB 6633 AN ACT CONCERNING STALKING. The YWCA New Britain, Sexual Assault Crisis Service provides services to all towns in Hartford County plus Plymouth and part of Tolland County, including responding directly to 14 hospitals throughout the state.

As a state certified sexual assault counselor/advocate who has counseled and advocated for many survivors of sexual assault, I have seen firsthand the emotional devastation that survivors experience. I have worked with a diverse population of survivors, including many survivors who have experienced stalking. 86% of survivors of sexual assault know their assailant and 75% of stalking victims are stalked by someone they know¹. Stalking victims have a higher prevalence of anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression than the general population, especially if the stalking involves being followed or having one's property destroyed².

Connecticut's current stalking laws are outdated and do not cover many of the behaviors that offenders use to target their victims. 1 in 4 victims report being stalked through the use of some form of technology (such as e-mail or instant messaging) and 10% of victims report being monitored with global positioning systems (GPS), and 8% report being monitored through video or digital cameras, or listening devices¹.

HB 6633 would change current stalking laws to include such behaviors such as: GPS monitoring, repeatedly contacting a victim over the phone or the internet, and causing disruptions that could jeopardize a victim's employment.

HB 6633 would also increase penalties for stalking and better hold offenders accountable for their actions.

Stalking is a horrific crime, and it is an ordeal that no one should ever have to deal with. It is essential that laws protect those who have been victimized. I ask that you consider the rights of the individuals who have been victimized and please support the AN ACT CONCERNING STALKING.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Katrina Baum et al., "Stalking Victimization in the United States," (Washington, DC: BJS, 2009).

² . [Eric Blauuw et al., "The Toll of Stalking," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 17, no. 1 (2002):50-63.]