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Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. For the record, my name is Michelle Cruz and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut.

I am here this evening to testify in support of the Division of Criminal Justice, specifically funding for the Division to allow for the cold case unit to become fully operational.

Last week when I testified before you, I spoke of a fiction in our communities involving the Criminal Justice System. Today I would like to be more specific. For those who have not had their lives impacted by homicide, there is an assumption that if a murder occurs within their family, the murder will be solved and the offender(s) will be captured and prosecuted. Unfortunately for over 900 families in CT, this has not been the case. Their loved ones were ripped from their lives and their cases remain unsolved – or cold. The Division of Criminal Justice is the State Agency whose task it is to bring justice home by assisting in investigating and solving the over 900 estimated cold cases in CT. The Division of Criminal Justice, in 1998, created the Cold Case Unit, which was originally comprised of staff from within the Division to investigate and solve crimes that have gone "cold," or, rather, that are unsolved for a prolonged period of time. Then, under the guidance and direction of our current Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane, the Cold Case Unit was expanded to include the assignment of law enforcement officers from across the state to assist in the Cold Case. Through this collaboration, the Unit brought together experienced prosecutors and investigators from the Division, DOC, State Police and municipal police departments to solve these cases. In 2009, a second Cold Case Unit was established, to focus on Southeastern Connecticut/New London County. To date the Division of Criminal Justice's Cold Case Unit has solved cold case murders of over 40 victims. Currently the Cold Case Unit is actively working on over 20 additional cold cases. As of January 2011 the Unit determined that there were approximately 900 unsolved murders statewide since 1980.

The current collaboration of the Cold Case Unit includes a partnership with the Division, DOC, DEPP, Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Judicial Branch Office of Adult Probation, Connecticut's Board of Pardons and Parole, and municipal police departments. The Division oversees the Cold Case Unit through the work of a chief inspector; a supervisory inspector manages the day-to-day operations. The supervisory inspector is responsible for the cold case work of 20 detectives (that are generally assigned on a part-time basis), an employee from the Department of Correction, an analyst from the Division, the offsite facility, equipment, and the assignment of the related work. The Cold Case Unit obtained information from tip lines, emails,

letters, interviews, subpoenas, and from responses to the playing cards distributed to inmates in CT's prisons. The playing cards alone generated 170 tips.

In approximately 12 years, 40 homicides have been solved because of the work of the Unit. Suspected killers have been prosecuted with a success rate of 93 percent. Of the 40 cases there have been:

- Two serial killers with three victims each
- Four killers of two victims each
- Two suspected serial killers with ties to seven other homicides
- 23 killers associated with 19 other homicides (some victims had multiple killers)

The yearly cost of the Unit was in 2009 \$195K and in 2010 \$113K. These costs covered 1 supervisory inspector, a part-time analyst, and a portion of the Chief Inspector's annual salary. The other costs were associated with the facility and DNA kits. Much of the daily labor costs is split with municipal police, state police and federal investigators. The Unit has previously received grants from the Federal government to offset stipends to municipal departments and other costs.

Quoting directly from the 2009-2010 Audit of the Cold Case Unit, "Each successful arrest and conviction helps to convey to victims' families, criminals, and the general public that if a crime is committed, it will continue to be scrutinized and reinvestigated in a manner in which each victim will receive attention and that there will be continued efforts to bring each suspected killer to justice. Unfortunately, there are more cases than available resources, and delays of up to six months exist when new cases are presented to the Unit for investigation. The Cold Case Unit of the Division of Criminal Justice provides an invaluable service to victims, their families and the residents of the State of Connecticut. It performs this service in a very cost effective manner."

The bottom line is this; the Division is the one agency who can solve these Cold Cases. With the limited funding currently allocated to the Unit and the ability of the Division to fill current vacancies, the Division will be able to solve, at its current rate, another 40 cases in 10 years. The current reductions and the Division's inability to fill positions will halt the work of the Cold Case Unit.

I am encouraging the Appropriations Committee to allow the Division to fill those positions so as to not take valuable resources from the Cold Case Unit. Further, I am asking you to consider the impact of these 900 unsolved homicides on our state and its citizens, and set as a priority solving these cases. With the proper funding and resources, which would allow the Investigators to focus solely on solving these crimes, many of these cases could be solved. When looking at the Division's work and its funding, I encourage you not to simply look at daily input and output in Court, but rather the need to allocate resources to the 900 cold cases in CT. Bring these families justice and let's get the murderers off our streets.