

Testimony of Ingrid Pasten
In Support of *HB 5031 An Act Concerning Sexual Violence on College Campuses*
March 6, 2012

Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, my name is Ingrid Pasten and I am a permanent resident of Stamford CT and an intern and volunteer at *The Center for Sexual Assault Crisis Counseling and Education*. I am also an undergraduate student at *Sacred Heart University* where I am pursuing my Bachelor's Degree in Social Work.

I have seen and experienced firsthand an untold amount of sexual violence in my years as a student and most recently in the last two years as a volunteer for The Center's sexual assault crisis hotline. I have solidified my beliefs that students are constantly silenced by shame and fear to report sexual violence on campuses. For these reasons I stand firmly behind HB 5031: An Act Concerning Sexual Violence on College Campuses. By introducing students to an appropriate sexual violence program they will be better educated about the issue and ultimately know where to go if they need help or support.

The allegations about sexual abuse at Syracuse University and Penn State University illustrate the dangers of sexual assault and how these incidents can happen anywhere. While these cases did not involve peer to peer sexual violence, they illustrate that sexual violence can happen anywhere, even in what are considered to be some of the best institutions in the country. Not only does this happen in other states, but this happens in Connecticut. In January of 2012 at Sacred Heart University in Bridgeport, CT, two university students were charged for sexually assaulting a female student in an off-campus apartment.

The Act Concerning Sexual Violence on College Campuses can improve the services by:

- Educating the victims
- Educating bystanders to stop violence on campuses.
- Enforcing the importance of believing victims when they disclose, even if alcohol or drugs were involved.
- Requiring more training for institutions and new programs to push educators, police and others to aggressively pursue reports of sexual violence on campuses.
- Notifying survivors of their rights, empowering them to report the crime.

I firmly believe this bill will be crucial to stopping sexual violence on campuses; it would be extremely beneficial for the students and those who are already going through the trauma of having experienced sexual violence.

Thank you for your time.

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