

Testimony of
Connecticut General Assembly
Judiciary Committee
March 19, 2012

Good Afternoon.

I would like to introduce myself as I speak in support of Bill 5504, An Act Concerning Commercial Sexual Exploitation of a Minor. But, just telling you who I am is why I am here today.

You see, I have been called "Autumn," "Diamond," and many other advertised names in "Escort" ads on the internet. I have also been called whore, hooker, ho, slut, prostitute, and many other labels by the man who was my pimp and by the men who paid him to have sex with me.

Today, I know none of those names are true. They are not who I am. What I am is a victim of human trafficking who was sold through "Escort" advertisements here in Connecticut.

Who I am is simple. I'm just someone who grew up in Newington with a normal family and lots of friends. But like so many others, my life became entangled with drug use. One desperate night I met a man at about 11 o'clock who promised to ease my pain. He quickly too photos of me, posted them on the internet through several "Escort" websites, told me the simple rules for taking phone calls when men responded to the ads, and delivered me to my first date with a John.

All this happened in less than four hours. It only took four hours to lose the name my parents gave me on the day I was born, and become someone who had no real name, but just any man's slave for the night.

What happened to me – how it happened – is not unique. It is happening right now to girls all over Connecticut through the blatant advertising of "Escorts" in some of our most respected and well read newspapers and websites.

Yet, while these advertisements are in plain sight for everyone to see, the suffering and abuse we experience every day is hidden from view. No one sees what our pimps do to us, how they give us drugs to stay awake for

days at a time, feed us just enough to keep us skinny and looking young, tell us that making money for them by having sex with ten men a day is why we were put on this earth, and hit us for any reason they like.

And no one knows what the men who buy us do to us, how they pay to use our bodies any way they like, how they humiliate and degrade our spirits, and how they shop for us in the newspaper or on their computer as though they were buying any other cheap gadget they need for their convenience.

Today, I am asking you to help us stop hiding. I am asking you to expose these "Escort" ads for what they truly are. They are nothing but ads for selling human beings; girls like me who are given a new name and delivered to homes, motel rooms and casinos like a late night snack.

I am tired of hiding. I am tired of being called names that are not my own. I am tired of seeing what happens to girls like me who are being sold in public through these ads.

That's why I would like to introduce myself as I speak in support of Bill 5504.

My name, my real name, is Katell. With your help, no one will ever call me anything else.

Thank you.