

Testimony In Support of HB5031 AN ACT CONCERNING SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Dana Ilowite, Student

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Members of the Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement, my name is Dana Ilowite. I am currently an undergraduate at the University of New Haven, where I study Criminal Justice, Psychology, and Victim Services. In the fall I will be attending Columbia University to obtain a Master's in Social Work. I full support HB5031: An Act Concerning Sexual Violence on College Campuses because I believe that sexual violence needs to be made more aware to all.

Sexual violence can occur anywhere, especially on college campuses. In a world where victims are often made to feel worse about their attack by those who are supposed to be supporting them, finding ways to educate all those involved with campus life on this issue should be of the highest importance. The idea that college campuses do not have to have any of the guidelines mentioned in HB5031 is a scary one. Colleges and universities must be able to provide the various forms of support that victims of sexual assaults need. This bill will help raise awareness throughout the campuses and work toward prevention strategies. After the initial complaint is filed, many victims feel that they are being pushed aside while the justice system takes over. This way of thinking must end and support throughout the entire process must be available.

Colleges and universities hold events daily for various causes, but from experience I have not seen very many for sexual assault. HB5031 would help change that by providing students and staff with their schools policy on sexual assault and where to turn if one is ever to fall victim to such a violent act. It would require campaigns within the school to raise awareness and find ways of prevention. The bill also would require notification and of disciplinary proceedings of the assailant to the victim. I feel that this is a major point. Many victims feel that they are not included in the process after they make their complaint and allowing them to be part of the proceedings can help change that mindset in both the justice system and victims alike.

I truly believe that Hb5031 will only be a positive influence for all colleges and universities across the state. I urge you to join me in supporting this bill to help the safety and future of all college students.

Thank you,

Dana Ilowite

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