



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



Judiciary Committee

March 25, 2013

Testimony in FAVOR H.B. (6641)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OF PERSONS  
WHOSE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE LACK OF CONSENT IS  
SUBSTANTIALLY IMPAIRED.

My name is Meg McDermott and I live in Unionville CT. I am speaking on behalf of the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities, where I co-chair the Legislative Policy and Program Committee. The Council is a Governor-appointed body which includes people with developmental disabilities, family members and professionals working toward full inclusion of children and adults with all disabilities in the community. As a woman with a disability, this bill has special meaning to me.

The Council is in **FAVOR** of Raised Bill 6641 for the following reasons: 1. The proposed language would strengthen Connecticut law so that offenders would be accountable when they sexually assault people with developmental disabilities. 2. The phrase "mentally defective" will be removed from state statutes and replaced with more appropriate language; and 3. The proposed bill will clarify the term "physical helplessness" as defined in the Connecticut sexual assault statutes. The new definition clearly will state that a person is "physically helpless" when he or she is conscious but physically unable to resist or communicate unwillingness to a sexual act.

Nationally, 20% of women and 10% of men are sexually abused. These statistics are significantly higher for people with disabilities because predators may view people with disabilities as being vulnerable and easy to exploit. Their attackers may be their parents and other family members; personal assistants; spouses; as well as others who may take advantage of them.

We need to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are protected from sexual assault. The Council urges you to vote **YES ON BILL 6641**.

**Thank you.**

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