

Judiciary Committee

HB 6664 An Act Concerning Restraining Orders

Submitted by: Krystal Rich, Adult Advocate, Sexual Assault Crisis Service, a program of the YWCA New Britain

Honorable members of the Committee, my name is Krystal Rich and I am one of the Adult Advocates for the Sexual Assault Crisis Service (SACS), a program of the YWCA New Britain. As an Adult Advocate for an organization that serves primary and secondary sexual assault victims, I have seen first-hand the horrendous effects this crime has on survivors and their supporters. Today I would like to offer our support for HB 6664 An Act Concerning Restraining Orders.

Victims of sexual assault and stalking deserve, at the very least, to have some form of protection from their perpetrator. Currently, sexual assault and stalking victims can only obtain a civil restraining order if their aggressor is, or was at any time a domestic partner, family member or household member. Victims whose aggressor is a friend, acquaintance or stranger are not permitted to obtain a restraining order and are forced to live their lives in fear. The only other option is to obtain a criminal protective order if their aggressor is arrested and the case is brought to court. The unfortunate reality is that the rates of arrests in these situations are very low.

Furthermore, the rates of people who are assaulted by someone other than a domestic partner or family member are high. Statistics gathered by the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) indicate that 2/3 of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, where 32% of those are committed by a friend or acquaintance. In addition, 36% of stalking victims are stalked by someone other than a current or former family or household member.

As an Adult Advocate I have seen 7 cases in the past 6 months in which a restraining order was not granted to a sexual assault victim because the aggressor in each situation was a friend or acquaintance. After being denied the right to a restraining order, each person indicated they felt re-victimized by a system that was supposed to protect them. Each person was not only fearful for themselves but for their families as well.

Passing HB 6664 will take us one more step in the direction of protecting each person from enduring the effects associated with sexual violence and stalking.

I hope you will join me in supporting HB 6664 and show that Connecticut is committed to protecting all victims of sexual assault and stalking.

Thank you for your time.

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