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**Testimony of Garvin G. Ambrose, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Monday, April 15, 2013**

Good day Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is Garvin Ambrose and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning:

Raised Senate Bill No. 1158, An Act Concerning Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking;
and
Raised House Bill No. 6696, An Act Concerning Enhanced State Efforts to Prevent Human Trafficking.

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) fully supports all efforts to reduce and prevent cases of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation destroy the spirits of those being trafficked and abused and is a blight to the unwitting communities in which the trafficking occurs.

Section 1 of Raised Senate Bill No. 1158 will add the crime of commercial sexual exploitation of a minor among the offenses for which property, moneys and all proceeds derived from the crime may be subject to forfeiture by the state. Further, the proceeds from any sale of property and moneys are directed to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund after the payment of liens, storage or other associated costs, and court costs, an enhancement to the availability of services to victims of human trafficking.

Sections 2 and 3 of the proposal seek to expand awareness and education about human trafficking with the development of a notice concerning the services that are available to a victim of human trafficking and the toll-free anti-trafficking hotline to access assistance. The notices would be required to be posted in a conspicuous location at each truck stop and premises where beer and alcohol are sold and/or consumed (with limited exceptions).

According to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC), Connecticut State Report, between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2012, there were 28 cases that reference potential trafficking situations.¹ Most recently, Jie Li was arrested on April 3, 2013 and charged with human trafficking, second-degree promoting prostitution and second-degree threatening; Chun Lan Tam Wang, arrested in December; her charges include human trafficking, second-degree promoting

¹ <http://www.polarisproject.org/state-map/connecticut>

prostitution, second-degree unlawful restraint, second-degree threatening and cruelty to persons. Both criminal cases remain pending. The additional presence of human trafficking notices, situated in high risk environments, is just another tool for the prevention of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Section 5 of Raised Senate Bill No. 1158 would require the Office of Victim Services to conduct an analysis of the compensation and restitution services provided to victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking and determine whether the needs of victims are being addressed or whether enhancements to services are needed. I urge the Committee to vote favorably on Raised Senate Bill No. 1158.

With regards to Raised House Bill No. 6696, the proposal seeks to revise the statutory criteria for trafficking in persons and to increase the penalty for persons who patronize a prostitute that they know is (1) under 18 years of age; or (2) is a victim of human trafficking. Those who support the business of human trafficking are deserving of an equally harsh penalty as the trafficker.

Section 3 of the proposal would allow the court to vacate a conviction for prostitution if the court finds that the convicted defendant was also a victim of human trafficking at the time the offense was committed and was coerced into committing the offense. Although Connecticut has made tremendous progress in identifying and addressing the needs of victims of human trafficking, there are cases where the status of a victim may not be easily ascertained.

Finally, Section 4 of Raised House Bill No. 6696 would establish a task force to study data relating to human trafficking in the state. The study would include an evaluation of the laws relating to human trafficking as well as recommendations to enhance protections against human trafficking. The proposal would require the task force to submit a report of its findings and recommendations not later than January 1, 2014, which is an optimistic expectation. I would urge the Committee, however, to consider an amendment to provide a lengthier and reasonable time period, such as July 1, 2014, so that the task force is not hasty in its findings and recommendations.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony. I urge the Committee to vote favorably on Raised Senate Bill No. 1158 and Raised House Bill No. 6696.

Respectfully submitted,



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