

SOUTH WINDSOR POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Honorable Chair and Members of the Joint Committee on Government
Administration and Elections:

My name is Matthew Reed. I am Chief of Police of the South Windsor Police Department and a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Foundation for Open Government.

I am writing to you in **OPPOSITION** to **Bill 381: An Act Concerning the Task Force on Victim Privacy and the Public's Right to Know.**

As Chief of Police, I interact with Connecticut's Freedom of Information Act on a daily basis. I am a staunch supporter of the Act and truly believe in the free flow of information between government entities and the people we serve.

While I concur with the need to afford protections to the victims of crimes, I don't believe that result will come with the passage of this piece of legislation.

I think this legislation as written provides a false sense of protection to crime victims. It has long been my interpretation of the Act that certain public records are exempt from disclosure at the discretion of the government agency.

My interpretation is grounded in the wording of Subsection (b) of section 1-210 which reads; "*Nothing in the Freedom of Information Act shall be construed to require the disclosure of:*" [this is followed by a list of 29 exemptions]

This statement simply says that the agency cannot be compelled to produce certain information by virtue of the Act. It does NOT state an outright prohibition on the release of the specified list of information, but instead provides the agency the discretion to either release or withhold certain information.

While I am not inclined to encourage this body to outright prohibit the release of any government information, I believe that this amended statute as proposed will create confusion as to what information can and cannot be released. If the legislature truly intends to *prohibit* the release of certain information, then the statute should say that.

The amended statute as proposed will lead crime victims and their families to believe that certain information is protected, when in fact, it is not.

Respectfully,

Matthew D. Reed
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