Raised Bill 388
Public Hearing: 3-10-14

TO: MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMM.
FROM: THE 26 FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS OF THE SANDY HOOK SCHOOL SHOOTING
DATE: MARCH 10, 2014

RE: OPPOSITION TO RAISED BILL 388, SECTION 1, PART 27 AND SECTION 2(NEW) – AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE ON VICTIM PRIVACY AND THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW.

The 26 Families of the Sandy Hook School Shooting strongly oppose Raised Bill 388, Section 1, part 27 and Section 2 (NEW) and oppose its passage.

We appreciate the hard work of the Task Force on Victim Privacy on a wide range of issues. However, for us, the most important issue has always been ensuring that no one be able to look through the photographs of our murdered children, mothers, brothers and sisters, let alone publish them. It seems as though it was just yesterday that we were at the Capital sharing with each of you the pain and fear that we had over the potential release of photographs of our loved ones. So many of you listened to us, and in many cases, cried with us as we explained how important it was that those photos never be seen.

Although we were the public face of the issue, we were speaking on behalf of all persons who have lost a loved one to homicide. Our pain is not unique. What is different however is the extraordinary amount of press coverage this terrible tragedy has caused and thereby the voice it gave us to speak about the importance of protecting the dignity and privacy of homicide victims and their families.

You listened to us. We still remember so clearly that late night / early morning in June when Public Act 13-311 was passed. We can hear the words of the leadership from both parties, in both chambers, assuring us that the photographs of our loved ones would never be published or otherwise made available to satisfy the morbid or prurient motivations of anyone . We remember when some of us were asked to stand on the floors of your respective chambers and watch as virtually every single one of you joined us in passing Public Act 13-311.

We thank you.

Raised Bill No 388, section 1, part 27 and Section 2 (new) seeks to undo all that we accomplished. Raised Bill No. 388 would take away the protection that families of homicide victims now hold. It flies in the face of all that you just did last year. Under the Raised Bill, upon passage, <u>anyone</u> could look through the photographs taken inside Sandy Hook School on December 14, 2012.

We understand the interest of the public in having access to public documents. We appreciate how the remainder of the bill tries to balance those concerns. However, to us and the families of all homicide

victims, these are not public records -- they are pictures of our family members in their final horrific moments.

Should you decide to undo the step forward made last year for the families of homicide victims, as Raised Bill No. 388 seeks to do, we would respectfully ask that it be done only prospectively. Virtually all legislation passed is done so prospectively. We and other families of homicide victims have been assured that our pictures will never be seen. We were promised that by this body. Therefore, to the extent that photographs of any homicide victim are to be made available for inspection or production, that law should only apply to homicides in the future.

WE STRONGLY URGE YOU TO OPPOSE RAISED BILL 388. Thank you.

Submitted on behalf of the families by:

Attorney Morgan Rueckert
Shipman & Goodwin, LLP
One Constitution Plaza
Hartford, CT 06103
860-251-5821

Attorney Douglas P. Mahoney
Tremont & Sheldon, P.C.
64 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, CT 06604
203-335-5145