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Good Morning Representative Willis, Senator Cassano, Representative LeGeyt, Senator Boucher and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5029, *An Act Concerning Sexual Assault and Intimate Partner Violence on Campus*.

I want to take this opportunity to thank this committee for their leadership on issues surrounding violence against women at our institutions of higher education. Thanks to your leadership, our state is leading the nation on this issue and with this legislation I believe we can continue that strong position.

I also want to thank the brave students and alumni of the University of Connecticut who came forward last fall and shared their experiences. Without their strength and fortitude we would likely not be having this conversation today. Because of them, our state's colleges and universities, with the help of this legislation, will be required to dramatically improve their response to sexual assault and intimate partner violence on our college campuses. Students at UConn have been at the forefront of these conversations for many years. Listening to their voices, we can develop the best responses to and prevention methods for violence against women.

On many occasions I have heard our Attorney General George Jepsen compare the issue of violence against women to that of drunk driving. The campaign against drunk driving has reduced drunk driving deaths from 15,827 in 1991 to 9,878 in 2011. This is a direct result of advocacy on the part of victims of drunk driving and their families working tirelessly to increase penalties for these offenses and changing our society's perception of and acceptance of drunk driving. We must do the same for violence against women and I believe we will see similar results.

We can no longer accept that 1 in 5 women will be sexually assaulted in her college years. Would parents willingly send their teenagers to an institution where there was a 1 in 5 chance they would incur a serious, life altering injury?

We must understand that these crimes are viewed differently and work to change that. We don't ask people who have been mugged how often they have given money away to charity or why they were clearly flaunting their affluence through their appearance. Why should we ask similar questions of victims of sexual violence?

We also must shift the role of men in this conversation. According to Dr. David Lisak, who recently presented at the University of Connecticut, 3% of college men account for 90 to 95 % of rapes. This is a critical number to understand. Men often feel as though they are being lumped together when we talk about violence against women. Educating everyone that these offenders are really a small part of the population can play a critical role in shifting this conversation and empowering men to be leaders in this conversation. Then this issue can stop being a "women's issue" and be what it actually is: the issue of violent men perpetrating violence against women and other men.

To that end, I ask the leaders of this committee to solicit the support of all members of the Connecticut General Assembly for this bill. It is a tremendous accomplishment that every woman who serves in the House and the

Senate, Republican and Democrat, has pledged her support for this bill. I thank the leaders who made that happen. But I suggest to you that having every woman and man sponsor this bill would send an even more powerful statement that the state of Connecticut takes violence against women seriously and recognizes that this is an issue for all of us, not just women.

The bill raised by this committee will provide clear direction to all of our institutions of higher education on how to respond to incidents of sexual assault and intimate partner violence in their campus communities. As this committee learned at the public hearing held on these issues in November, having a clear policy for how to report these incidents is critical for victims of these crimes to come forward. Requiring that these policies be given "in plain language" is an important step to ease the complexity of the processes that currently exist at many of our campuses. Additionally, I suggest that the committee consider requiring in Section 2(b) that institutions work with CONNSACS and CCADV member programs to develop a campus specific advocate system and perhaps offices for these agencies on campus. Students who report being the victim of sexual assault and intimate partner violence have to navigate a complicated student judicial process and the criminal justice system. These students should be given an independent advocate to work with through these processes whose sole purpose is to ensure the victim is informed of all options available to her or him and that that advocate's loyalty to the victim cannot be questioned. This will eliminate confusion and empower victims to move forward as they see fit.

Many students report not coming forward as victims or witnesses because of fear that they will face discipline for violating the student code of conduct or other similar rules for activities such as alcohol consumption. Policies should make it clear that a student will not be punished for other violations while making the effort to report sexual assault or intimate partner violence.

In section 2(d), the institution should be required to do just that.

The bill also requires that institutions establish a trained sexual assault response team. In addition to the members listed in the bill I suggest that representatives from the Women's Center on a campus be included if such a center exists on a campus. Additionally, a member from a community based domestic violence program should be included on the SART.

It is undisputed that sexual and domestic violence on college campus are more frequently committed by students involved with fraternities or athletics. Because of this, I believe professionals who work with these groups should also be a part of the SART, if the campus has these groups as part of their community. I also implore the committee to include students on the SART. Students can provide critical input from a unique perspective on these issues. I suggest that there be several students on the SART representing various parts of the campus community, especially parts of the community most affected by sexual and domestic violence.

The committee should also consider requiring that institutions that offer student health services have Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners on staff. Many students reported having to travel off campus to have rape kits administered. Having these services on campus is one more way to mitigate the trauma a victim experiences.

I also ask the committee to consider imposing financial penalties on institutions that willingly do not cooperate with law enforcement investigations into sexual assaults and intimate partner violence crimes in their campus communities or who do not comply with all sections of the legislation before you. I believe the impact of this would be similar to that of the 2011 "Dear Colleague" from the U.S. Department of Education. This letter required that procedures to deal with sexual violence be in place or the institution faced the loss of federal funding. Institutions of higher education listened to that directive, albeit with lengthy policies whose effectiveness have yet to be fully evaluated. The legislation before you and the improvements to it being presented today, need to be taken seriously, and financial penalties will ensure that it is.

While it is important that our colleges and universities have the best response to sexual assault and intimate partner violence, it is also critical that these institutions be at the forefront of preventing these crimes. This legislation should also require bystander intervention training at all campuses. This training should be given to all students, faculty and staff on an annual basis. Bystander intervention training gives people the tools to disrupt abusive behavior and create a culture where this abuse is no longer acceptable. This is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the number of sexual assault and intimate partner violence crimes on our campuses. The University of New Hampshire instituted a bystander intervention training program for its athletic department. In 2007 the

department had 75 cases before the university's judicial affairs office. After bystander intervention training was added, in 2013 just 7 athletes had cases before judicial affairs.

The committee should seriously consider the detailed testimony of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services Centers, the Office of the Victim Advocate and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women. These changes will greatly enhance the legislation before you.

The legislation presented today is critical for both protecting our young people and ending a culture where violence against women and men perpetrated by men is acceptable. Thank you again for your tremendous work on this issue and for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with you all on this bill in the weeks to come.