



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

TESTIMONY OF THE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

IN SUPPORT OF:

**S.B. NO. 491: AN ACT CONCERNING HARASSMENT OF A VICTIM OF VIOLENT CRIME
OR A RELATIVE OF A VICTIM OF VIOLENT CRIME**

JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
March 31, 2014

The Division of Criminal Justice respectfully recommends the Committee's JOINT FAVORABLE SUBSTITUTE REPORT for S.B. No. 491, An Act Concerning Harassment of a Victim of Violent Crime or Relative of a Victim of Violent Crime.

This bill would amend the current statutes governing Harassment in the Second Degree to specifically prohibit harassment directed at a victim of a violent crime or the relative of a victim of a violent crime. The bill also provides for an enhanced penalty for such conduct, that being a class A misdemeanor as opposed to the class C misdemeanor classification that applies to other instances of Harassment in the Second Degree.

This bill represents yet another step forward in the evolution of the development of statutory provisions to carry out the intent of the Victim Rights amendment of our Connecticut Constitution. S.B. No. 491 further underscores our commitment to protecting the rights of victims.

The Division fully concurs with the testimony submitted in support of S.B. No. 491 by the Office of the Victim Advocate, which proposes specific substitute language to apply the revised harassment statute to all victims of crime or the relatives of victims of crime and not only those identified in the current language of the bill as victims of violent crime or their relatives.

In conclusion, the Division wishes to thank the Committee for this opportunity to offer input on this matter.