

Committee on Children Public Hearing
February 27th, 2014
Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 203

Good morning members of the Committee on Children. I want to thank the committee chairs for an opportunity to speak on this matter. My name is Colleen Gore and I am a Bachelor of Social Work student at Southern Connecticut State University, and I am working as an intern at CT Junior Republic. I am here today in support of SB 203.

Statistically, every two minutes, somebody is sexually assaulted in the United States. Teenage girls are four times more likely to be victims of sexual assault than the normal population. Age-Appropriate education in schools has the potential to diminish these statistics by teaching individuals, both students and faculty the warning signs of sexual abuse and assault, resources to further educate individuals and a response policy that has the ability to protect the individual. According to the Rape Crisis Center website, sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes with only an average of 39% being reported to police each year. Providing individuals with resources and education may cause individuals to either come forward and report to police, or notice warning signs on other individuals and have the knowledge and support to have the other person receive the right help. I used to be a Resident Advisor at SCSU, where I held an assault awareness program for my residents. 70% of the individuals who attended my program had no previous knowledge of sexual assault statistics, or what to do in certain situations they may be placed in. Education in schools can prevent a wide spread lack of knowledge of this important topic.

I understand the opposition's side, saying that education about this "taboo" topic should not be in schools and students do not need to know about these topics at an early age. But if there is no knowledge early on, we cannot expect people to know what to do in a situation they have the possibility to be faced with. If a parent does not want their child a part of the program, according to Section 1.3 subsection C, they have a right to waive the child from the program and be replaced with another academic program during the time of the course, without any consequences.

Again, I am in support of SB 203 and I ask the committee to vote favorably out of committee. Providing the proper education can reduce statistics by many. I want to thank the committee again for their time listening to my testimony.

Thank you again,
Colleen Gore
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Intern – CT Junior Republic