



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Public Hearing Testimony

Judiciary Committee

March 30, 2015



**GOVERNOR'S BILL NO. 6849 AN ACT STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF
HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) **supports** Bill No. 6849, An Act Strengthening Protections for Victims of Human Trafficking.

This bill, introduced by Governor Malloy, makes a number of statutory changes to better protect victims of human trafficking and to strengthen criminal penalties for perpetrators.

Over the past four years the State of Connecticut, with the support of the General Assembly, has put forth tremendous efforts to end the sale of our children. For DCF, these efforts fall within three main categories: Identification and Response; Awareness and Education; and Restore and Recovery. Since 2008, when collaborative efforts in Connecticut significantly increased -- both internally at DCF and externally with the community -- there have been over 300 children who have been identified and confirmed as victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking. Of the victims identified, the majority have been involved with child welfare services in some manner. Many of these children have been victimized while in foster care or congregate care.

Each year, a national organization called Shared Hope International produces recommendations from an annual report card regarding domestic minor sex trafficking produced by Shared Hope International. The organization recommended a number of statutory revisions for Connecticut.¹

Each section of this bill specifically addresses recommendations included in the report card:

- Section 1 amends § 19a-112b of the General Statutes which provides services to victims of human trafficking and other commercial sexual exploitation of children offenses. This

¹ Shared Hope International. (2014). *Protected Innocence Challenge: State Action. National Change.*
http://sharedhope.org/PICframe4/reportcards/PIC_RC_2014_CT.pdf

includes access to the following services: (1) Counseling regarding human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immune deficiency syndrome; (2) HIV-related testing; and (3) referral service for appropriate health care and support services. Such services shall be provided through counseling and testing sites funded by the Department of Public Health.

- Section 2 amends § 46a-170 of the General Statutes to expand the membership of the Trafficking in Persons Council to expressly include child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.
- Section 3 amends Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46b-146 of the General Statutes to permit a minor who has incurred a criminal record as a result of being trafficked the opportunity to seek the expungement of the records immediately or, at latest, upon turning 18 years of age.
- Section 4 amends § 53a-192a of the General Statutes to eliminate the requirement of proving use of force or threat of use of force, fraud, or coercion in the sex trafficking of a minor under the age of 18 and to include those who have knowingly assisted, enabled, or financially benefited from domestic minor sex trafficking.
- Section 5 amends Conn. Gen. Stat. § 54-41b of the General Statutes will permit prosecutors to make application to a panel of judges for an order authorizing the interception of any wire communication by investigative officers when such interception may provide evidence of the commission of offenses involving: trafficking in persons; promoting prostitution in the first degree; aggravated sexual assault of a minor; enticing a minor; and, employing a minor in an obscene performance.
- Section 6 amends § 54-211 of the General Statutes to make an exception from the listed ineligibility factors for applications for crime victim compensation to include minors under the age of 18 who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.