NATASHA M. PIERRE, ESQ.
State Victim Advocate

Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Monday, March 23, 2015

Good morning Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is Natasha Pierre and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning:

Senate Bill No. 1114, *An Act Concerning The Commission On Racial And Ethnic Disparity In The Criminal Justice System*

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) is an active member of the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System and fully supports Senate Bill No. 1114 as it will enhance the effectiveness of the Commission by broadening the populations that it represents while refining the Commission's mandates to achieve more attainable goals. The proposal before you contains the recommendations agreed upon by the Commission. The OVA had the opportunity to participate in these discussions concerning changes to the Commission's enabling statute. There is one provision concerning the commission's mission as it relates to victims of crime that was discussed by Commission members but seems to have been inadvertently omitted from Senate Bill No. 1114. As a result, the OVA would like to offer the following amendment:

(b) The mission of the commission shall be to address the overrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities, with particular attention to African-Americans and Latinos, in the state's criminal justice system, and shall include consideration of the impact of such racial and ethnic disparity on minority communities. The commission's purview shall include consideration of the impact that racial and ethnic disparity in the criminal justice system has on victims of crime. The commission shall:

Thank you for consideration of my testimony and suggested amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

Natasha Pierre, Esq.
State Victim Advocate

505 Hudson Street 5th Floor, Hartford, CT 06106 ▪ Phone: (860) 550-6632 ▪ Fax: (860) 560-7065 ▪ www.ct.gov/ova