



**Connecticut Conference  
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street  
Hartford, CT 06105-6004

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 6899:  
An Act Expanding Guardianship Opportunities for Children and Implementing  
Provisions of the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act  
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate  
Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ  
March 3, 2015**

Representative Urban, Senator Bartolomeo, and distinguished members of the Committee on Children:

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, and I am writing today in support of House Bill 6899: An Act Expanding Guardianship Opportunities for Children and Implementing Provisions of the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. We support extending guardianship opportunities for children in foster care by permitting subsidized guardianship for fictive kin and to make conforming changes to comply with the requirements of the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act.

I am writing on behalf of the 240 congregations and more than 73,000 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members.

The State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) acknowledges that Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking is an increasing issue in Connecticut afflicting children involved with the child welfare system. Statistics also tell us children who are involved with child welfare services and in the foster care system are at a much higher risk to be recruited into the sex industry via prostitution.<sup>1</sup>

So far in 2015 DCF has identified 10 children who have been sold for sex in Connecticut. In the previous four years, some 83 confirmed child prostitutes have been referred to DCF. Almost all the children who have been identified in Connecticut as being sex slaves were foster children or runaways with prior abuse.<sup>2</sup>

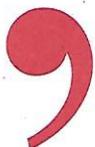
The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ therefore urges the Committee on Children to support House Bill 6899: An Act Expanding Guardianship Opportunities for Children and Implementing Provisions of the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. Please expand guardianship opportunities for children in foster care by permitting subsidized guardianship for fictive kin and make conforming changes to comply with the requirements of the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. The children of our state deserve it.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of House Bill 6899.

Blessings,  
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<sup>1</sup> Department of Children & Families

<sup>2</sup> The CT Mirror July 17, 2012 DCF Trying New Approach to Combat Child Sex Slavery



**God is still speaking,**

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