

**Written Testimony for The Judiciary Committee – March 11, 2015 in Hartford, CT**  
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**In support of SB 650 and HB 6848**

I am a 66 year-old grandmother with two grown children, two grown step-children and three grandchildren. I worked for 10 years as a special education teacher and then 26 years as a pension consultant. I retired in 2012 and currently serve on two non-profit boards and volunteer in various other capacities. My current husband is a professor at UCONN. I have a secure and happy life.

My life was not always so happy or secure. In 1987, at the age of 38, I found myself with two young children married to a man who had mental health problems and was using illegal drugs. My husband's business had failed, we had no money and few resources. After a great deal of inner struggle, I made the difficult decision to leave my husband because at that time he was doing things that were putting all of us in danger. When I finally did leave with the children he became obsessed and began to stalk me. Our children at the time were aged 5 and 8. On one occasion my husband followed me to my parents' house after I had become alarmed at his behavior. Upon returning to my apartment, I discovered that he had broken down the door from the basement into the kitchen in an effort to find out where I had gone. The police officer I called told me I should obtain a restraining order. In that moment I experienced some of the fear and uncertainty that victims of domestic abuse face every day. In fact, I decided not to get a restraining order because I was too afraid of the effect on my husband's state of mind if I were to do so. Fortunately for me, there were no guns involved in this equation. I can't even imagine the decision-making dilemma that I would have faced had this man owned a gun.

In time, my ex-husband was able to get his life back on track and we were able to work together to raise two successful children. However, I will never forget the fear and uncertainty of that time while he was in such a terrible state of mind. I believe that the time when I left the relationship was a time of real risk for my family. My husband was at risk for doing something he would regret for the rest of his life, I was at risk for being the victim of his obsession and out-of-control anger, and our children were at risk of witnessing a tragedy.

I am submitting this written testimony in support of SB 650 and HB 6848 which modify the rules of temporary restraining orders to allow the removal of firearms, ammunition and gun/eligibility permits during ex parte restraining orders. The removal of these objects reduces the risk of a deadly tragedy. As I know from experience, the period of leaving an abusive relationship can be a volatile and potentially dangerous time, and even more dangerous is the period directly following the issuance of a temporary restraining order.

Victims, abusers and police departments will all benefit from the modifications suggested in these two bills. Victims will receive more protection, abusers will have less opportunity to make a horrible mistake, and police may have to deal with one less tragedy in their community.

Thank you for your consideration of these two bills.

