

Zoë Grant
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Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Willis, and Members of the committee,

“Affirmative consent is a knowing, voluntary, and mutual decision among all participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent can be given by words or actions, as long as those words or actions create clear permission regarding willingness to engage in the sexual activity. Silence or lack of resistance, in and of itself, does not demonstrate consent. The definition of consent does not vary based upon a participant's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.”

My name is Zoë Grant. I am a junior at Central Connecticut State University and **I am writing in support of HB 5376: An Act Concerning Affirmative Consent**. I am a Sexual Assault Prevention event coordinator at the Ruthe Boyea Women's Center here on campus. I am also an active member of Senate on the Student Government Association here on campus. Most importantly, I am a Sexual Assault Survivor who speaks on behalf of the many women who have been silenced by rape and other sexual acts of violence.

Two years and 2 months ago a terrible act of sexual violence was committed against me. I started my night like any other girl would. I was preparing for a little get together by putting my make up on, choosing a cute outfit to wear and making sure I smelled nice. I was told that it was going to be a small gathering. Little did I know, that make up would be running down my face by the end of the night. This small get together turned into a huge party with a ratio of 3 women to about 15 men. After being verbally degraded all night, I was penetrated with a candy cane and then with a finger. I felt as though all of my humanity was taken away from me that night. I was told that I was a “little white bitch who didn't belong here” and that I should have expected this to happen to me because this is what happens on that side of town.

I am sick and tired of hearing the excuses. Was I under the influence of alcohol? Yes. That in and of itself is NOT consent. I gave verbal consent that I did not want to be touched. That

is also NOT consent. It is important to educate the people about what consent is. The men that violated me believed that since they only penetrated me with a candy cane that it was okay.

I believe that the Affirmative Consent Act will allow people to become educated on what consent is. There will be no more confusion about what confirmative consent is. This act will also support the survivors who have been victimized. Many people believe that if individuals ask for consent, that it is a mood killer. I have a very opposite opinion. I believe that consent allows for both parties to be 100% confident in their decisions. Only a “yes” means a “yes” and that is why I am urging you to vote in support of HB 5376: An Act Concerning Affirmative Consent.

Sincerely,

Zoë Grant