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*State Victim Advocate*

Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate  
Submitted to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Good afternoon Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate 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:

House Bill No. 5235, An Act Concerning Surety Bail Bond Agents

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) supports Section 2 of House Bill No. 5235 as it will authorize the Insurance Commissioner to establish continuing education requirements for surety bail bond agents.

The OVA has received complaints throughout the years from victims of domestic violence that involve surety bail bond agents providing a "ride home" to offenders they have bailed out of jail after a domestic violence arrest. In most cases of domestic violence, law enforcement officers will impose non-financial conditions of release upon an offender, to ensure the safety of the victim. As surety bail bond agents accept the responsibility of assuring an offender's appearance in court, the bail bond agent must also be mindful of the conditions imposed upon the offender relating to the offender's release and not inadvertently assist in the violation of such conditions.

Therefore, the OVA recommends that Section 2 be amended to include that such education requirements specifically include, at a minimum, domestic violence awareness and the various orders of protection (civil restraining order; criminal protective order; standing criminal protective order; civil order of protection; foreign orders of protection; and non-financial conditions of release).

The OVA urges the Committee's favorable report of House Bill No. 5235, with the recommended changes as stated above. Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

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