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Good morning Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Christopher Pedroso and I live in Bristol, CT.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **Senate Bill No. 442, An Act Concerning A Victim's Right To Be Reasonably Protected From A Person Accused of Committing a Crime.**

I am a victim of a crime that occurred at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph on 6/3/2014. I'm here today to tell the Judiciary Committee about the incident that happened at the Cathedral and how it relates to the proposed changes to the general statute by bill No. 442 will afford greater protections to crime victims.

On that date in 2014 my family and I were at the Cathedral to attend my nieces High School graduation, occurring there. We were harassed and threatened, and I was assaulted by my former brother-in-law in the Cathedral.

He was subsequently arrested and the case made its way through the Hartford Superior Court system. The defendant was allowed to enter a Supervised Diversionary program for people with Mental Health issue.

In information provided to the court by 1 other victim and me, the court was informed of the defendant's possession of an unregistered firearm, which we had seen in the defendant's possession in the past.

In my victim's statement to the court I requested that the defendant surrender this and any other firearms in his possession. Although the defendant was ordered by the court to have no contact with any of the victims, I was informed that there were no provisions in the law to allow for the surrender of firearms.

The defendant was allowed to enter the Diversionary program due to having a Mental Health Diagnosis. Since there was no provision in the law, he was not made to surrender his firearms.

I live right next door to the defendant in Bristol CT. Our homes are in such close proximity as to be within 6' to 8' of my property line. The defendant was married to my ex-wives sister, but they have been divorced for some time now, but he is still my neighbor. I have reason to fear for my safety. I see stories that are all too common of persons with Mental Health issues having access to firearms and committing horrific acts. I do not want to ever be the victim of such acts.

If this proposed language is approved, it would make it a condition of entry by a defendant into the program that they surrender firearms and ammunition that are in their possession.

I am not against the possession of firearms by law abiding citizens. I hold a CT State Pistol Permit and support 2nd Amendment Rights. I do not believe that those with criminal histories and Mental Health Diagnosis should be allowed to possess firearms. I should not have to live in fear for my safety.

I would like to compliment the state on the advancements it has made in victims' rights. The Office of the Victim's Advocate has been a great aid and comfort to the victims of crime as we navigated the Justice system, which we often are all too unfamiliar with. I would like to remind the committee that work still needs to be done and the proposed changes would work towards advancing victim's right.

The proposed changes would help to further protect victims and provide for their continued safety, and I ask that you support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your continued support for victims of crime. Please vote in favor of Senate Bill No. 442.

If you have any questions for me, I will do my best to answer them.

Christopher A. Pedroso
3/14/2017