State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Testimony in opposition to line items removed from Agency Budgets
Rape Crisis Line Item
Appropriations Committee
February 18, 2016

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Kane, Representative Ziobron, and honorable members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am writing in opposition to the Governor's recommendation to consolidate several items in the Public Health Budget, specifically, the Rape Crisis line item. This is a crucial line item of the budget. The Rape Crisis hotline and services provided to victims through this funding that is crucial to protecting victims and should remain intact.

This consolidation will cause a competition for reduced funds. Furthermore, the Governors recommendation to take a number of line items in the Judicial Branch budget, specifically, the line item for the Forensic Sex Evidence Exams (the SAFE Program and reimbursement to hospitals for sexual assault evidence collection kits), and consolidating them into the General Fund of the Judicial Branch will be detrimental to the victims these services aim to assist.

When law enforcement begins to investigate a sexual assault, DNA evidence is a central part to finding the assailant. It is imperative that this DNA be collected and tested in order for the victim to receive the justice they so deserve. DNA evidence can make or break the outcome of the case and can lead to prosecution of all types of crimes. Such DNA evidence collected from the kits not only can help bring justice to the case at hand but also can help investigators solve crimes totally unrelated to the crime currently being investigated. When such kits are tested they can help identify an unknown assailant, confirm the presence of a known suspect, confirm the survivor's account of the attack and discredit the subject, it can connect the suspect to other crime scenes and exonerate innocent suspects. At the end of the day rape kits play a crucial role in the investigation process and provide law enforcement with the evidence they need to help bring the suspect to justice and give the survivor a piece of mind.

Public Safety is one the most important functions of government. These crucial services are very important to public safety in the state and help to ensure that we will be able to provide dependable, all-inclusive, victim-centered culturally knowledgeable services for victims and survivors of sexual assault in our state.

Sincerely,

Brenda L Kupchick Laura Devlin Tony Hwang

Brenda Kupchick
State Representative
132nd District

Laura Devlin
State Representative
134th District

Tony Hwang
State Senator
28th District