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*State Victim Advocate*

Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate  
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee  
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Good morning Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and distinguished members of the Judiciary 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:

*Senate Bill No. 324, An Act Concerning a Temporary Holding Period For Certain Family Violence Arrestees*

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) fully supports Senate Bill No. 324 as it will provide greater protection to victims of domestic violence during one of the most dangerous times for a victim—the arrest of the abuser.

Many law enforcement agencies in the state have been trained and have implemented the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP). This program is designed to help law enforcement officers identify victims of domestic violence that are at an increased risk of harm. If an officer determines an increased risk of harm, the officer will attempt to connect the victim with a domestic violence victim advocate to immediately engage the victim with services, including safety planning and emergency shelter.

Senate Bill No. 324 is a compliment to the LAP as it will allow for an eight hour period of time, after the arrest of a domestic violence offender, for the victim to make any necessary decisions and arrangements without worry of the offender returning and causing further harm. The victim may need to pack clothes and other personal items for her/himself and their children; gather important school, financial, medical and personal documents; make arrangements for transportation; make arrangements for the care of a pet; and inform family or friends of the situation. These tasks can be daunting under normal circumstances and are certainly compounded under the potential threat of further violence.

I strongly urge the Committee's favorable report of Senate Bill No. 324. Thank you for consideration of my testimony.