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*State Victim Advocate*

Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate  
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee  
Monday, March 14, 2016

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:

Raised Senate Bill No. 443, An Act Concerning Notification to Victim Support Groups of the Names of Victims of Domestic Violence

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) **OPPOSES** Raised Senate Bill No. 443 as it will undermine the confidentiality provisions currently afforded to victims of domestic violence.

The OVA understands the intent to connect victims of domestic violence with services, however, those services have to be accepted by the victim, when and if, the victim chooses and is in a safe place to be able to accept services.

Confidentiality protections for victims of domestic violence provides victims with a small measure of control while they are often in an uncontrollable situation. While outreach efforts are typically thought to be a positive approach, in cases of domestic violence it may inadvertently work against the victim. It takes a great deal of courage for a victim of domestic violence to leave an abusive relationship. Victims are scared, untrusting and overwhelmed. Outreach efforts that are unexpected to a victim may have the opposite desired effect.

The OVA strongly urges the Committee to **REJECT** Raised Senate Bill No. 443. Thank you for consideration of my testimony.