



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

OFFICE OF
THE STATE'S ATTORNEY
JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF WATERBURY

400 Grand Street
WATERBURY, CT. 06702-1913
TELEPHONE (203) 236-8130
FAX (203) 236-8155

MAUREEN T. PLATT
STATE'S ATTORNEY

Good Day. I am Maureen Platt the Chairperson of the Commission on the Standardization of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations and the State's Attorney for the Judicial District of Waterbury. I am here today to support Senate Bill 17, An Act Promoting Fairness in Access to Information, Support and Justice for Sexual Assault Victims. I am proud to report that Connecticut has often served as a model for other states regarding how sexual assault investigations should be conducted. This proposed act would further guarantee the rights and dignity of survivors of sexual violence and aid law enforcement in bringing sexual predators to justice.

This bill requires that hospitals contact a sexual assault victim advocate to support a survivor and provide valuable information regarding their rights. As a prosecutor who has handled thousands of these cases, I have often been told by survivors how confusing and frightening they were on the day of their attack. Providing an advocate to support this person on what is perhaps the most difficult day of their lives, can make all the difference in that victim's recovery. It can also encourage this survivor to cooperate with law enforcement in bringing their attacker to justice. What has become clear is that predatory sexual offenders do not end their violence until they are stopped. While law enforcement plays an important role in bringing offenders to justice, it is the survivor of sexual assaults that are the true heroes. It is only because of their courage and willingness to speak about their assaults, that attackers are held accountable preventing others from being victimized. It is unquestionable that victim advocates assist victims during this process and should be brought summoned as soon as possible.

S.B. 17 also requires that the Evidence Commission enact procedures to ensure that survivors of sexual violence be given access to information regarding the processing and testing of their kits. What is surprising to most people is that often times, the collection of evidence from victims utilizing the CT-100 kit during an examination can take several hours. After undergoing such an extensive and often intrusive examination, victims should be entitled to information regarding what information was obtained. By notifying and respecting the willingness of the survivor to submit to this kit, we are more likely to encourage victims to come forward and cooperate with law enforcement in not only prosecuting their attacker, but in preventing future attacks.

Lastly, this bill requires that these kits be tracked and accounted for during every step of the process. Connecticut has already begun this very necessary practice, but this should be made part of our law. Given the sacrifice of survivors in submitting to these exams, we must honor their willingness to undergo these examinations by mandating that all kits be submitted and processed. Tracking will ensure this result.

In closing, I would respectfully ask that one amendment be considered by this body. If through some error or omission the provisions of this act are not complied with, I would argue that the perpetrator of sexual violence should not receive the benefit of such failure. In other words, no violation of the provisions of this act should prevent the admission of any evidence obtained through the examination of the kit that would otherwise be admissible during a criminal prosecution or any other legal proceeding or suit.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen T. Platt
State's Attorney
Judicial District of Waterbury

