

Peterson, Bobbye

From: Annette Haskins <bluewillow@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 3:45 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Vote Yes on HB 7399

In Support of HB 7399 An Act Concerning Legal Protections for the Victims of Human Trafficking and the Protection of Minors from Cyber Exploitation
Judiciary Committee, April 1, 2019

Distinguished members of the Judicial Committee,

My name is Annette Haskins, and I am writing to you in support of HB 7399, An Act Concerning Privileged Communication Made by Victims of Human Trafficking to a Human Trafficking Counselor.

This Bill addresses an important gap in Connecticut's ability to provide effective services to survivors of human trafficking. Currently in Connecticut, a victim's communications with a human trafficking counselor are not confidential. I know from firsthand experience the trauma that makes healing difficult when a child sexual abuse survivor has no protected way of communicating with trustworthy adults. Therapeutic care depends on victims disclosing honestly and completely the facts, memories, thoughts, and feelings associated with their victimization. They must be able to confide in counselors without risk that the information they share could be disclosed publicly without their consent. This bill will enable children who have been trafficked to speak openly and confidentially to trained service providers. Further, this bill will expand the definition of commercial sexual abuse to include online exploitation, as well as offer additional protection to those children who committed crimes as a direct result of their trafficking.

Victims of human trafficking deserve protection and privacy. Survivors should have the right to decide when, what, and to whom their information is shared, and should not fear disclosure in court. HB 7399 will facilitate victims' access to services and protect children who are victims of this deplorable crime. I hope that the Committee will see the importance of strengthening the legislative protection for victims of child trafficking and join me in supporting HB 7399.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Annette Haskins