



Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Monday, April 1, 2019

Good morning Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom 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 in **SUPPORT** of:

Raised House Bill No. 7399, *An Act Concerning Legal Protections For the Victims of Human Trafficking and the Protection of minors From Cyber Exploitation*

As the State Victim Advocate, I am a member of the Trafficking in Persons Council and support the recommended changes in **Raised House Bill No. 7399** which, among other things, will serve to extend confidentiality protections to victims of child trafficking similar to the confidentiality protections currently afforded to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. This measure is a needed tool so that child trafficking victims, often with complex needs, will avail themselves of the support and expertise of anti-trafficking counselors knowing that their communications are shrouded in confidence. Building trust is paramount to any advocacy efforts between anti-trafficking counselors and the survivors that they serve. Thus, I urge the Committee's favorable report on this important proposal.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony and for your continued support of crime victims in Connecticut.