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**Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
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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 concerning:

Senate Bill No. 3, An Act Combatting Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment
House Bill No. 7396, An Act Concerning Parity Between Sexual Assault in the Case of a Spousal or Cohabiting Relationship and Other Crimes of Sexual Assault and Concerning the Investigation of a Family Violence Crime
Raised Bill No. 7341, An Act Concerning Rape by Impersonation

Crime victims in Connecticut have a state Constitutional right to be treated fairly and with respect throughout the criminal justice process. Unfortunately, for many victims of sexual assault, this right may never be realized because of the statute of limitations. The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) supports Senate Bill No. 3 to eliminate and extend the statute of limitations for prosecutions in cases of sexual assault. Additionally, the bill would eliminate the statute of limitations in civil actions brought by minors of sexual abuse, including those where the statute of limitations has already expired. I urge the Committee's favorable report of Senate Bill No. 3 in support of all victims of sexual violence and abuse.

House Bill No. 7396 will repeal sexual assault in a spousal or cohabiting relationship. Perhaps at one time in history it was necessary to declare that sexual assault was prohibited even in cases of a spouse or cohabiting relationship. However, since that time, we have progressed and recognized that sexual assault is a crime of violence and is not lessened if the perpetrator is a spouse or cohabiting partner.

Further, the OVA supports the premise of Raised Bill No. 7341. I look forward to the discussion of whether our current laws are sufficient to address the needs identified in the proposal.

All victims of sexual violence are deserving of equal treatment for the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault offenses. I strongly urge the Committee's favorable report of Senate Bill No. 3 and House Bill No. 7396.