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Testimony to the Judiciary Committee
Monday, March 15, 2021

House Bill No. 6505, An Act Concerning Court Operations, Section 29 SUPPORT

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee.

Crime victims in Connecticut have state constitutional rights, including the right to be reasonably protected from the accused, to notification, to attend proceedings, to communicate with the prosecutor, to restitution and to obtain information about the criminal case and the offender.

Public Act No. 19-187 requires that any case of a juvenile, transferred to the adult criminal docket, be private and confidential. At the time it was proposed, the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) sounded the alarm that the proposal was a complete violation of the constitutional rights of crime victims. Nevertheless, the proposal passed.

It wasn't long after its inception that a crime victim was denied access to court proceedings in the case of a juvenile offender, transferred to the adult docket, facing charges in the death of the victim's family member. The victim was also denied access to any information about the case or the offender and was denied the opportunity to speak with the prosecutor. The OVA worked with the state's attorney's office to file a motion in the case to permit the victim to attend proceedings and further exercise the rights afforded by the state constitution.

Section 29 of House Bill No. 6505 will restore the constitutional rights of crime victims that were lost as a result of *Public Act No. 19-187* by exempting crime victims and their next of kin from being excluded from the proceedings and obtaining information regarding the criminal case and the defendant. However, inherent in the bill is that crime victims are required to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and not further disclose any information about the case. This is a requirement for crime victims within the juvenile justice system but should not be a requirement imposed on crime victims in cases transferred to the adult criminal docket.

I strongly urge the Committee's support of Section 29 of House Bill No. 6505. Thank you for consideration of my testimony.