



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE DONNA M. VEACH
THIRTIETH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

RANKING MEMBER
INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4200
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700
Donna.Veach@housegop.ct.gov

MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Public Hearing Testimony
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Tuesday, March 4, 2024
Testimony in Support of: House Bill 5340

Chairmen Haddad and Slap, Ranking Members Haines and Kelly, Vice Chairs Rochelle and Maher, and Distinguished Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on **House Bill: 5340 An Act Allowing Third Party Victims to Participate in an Investigation or Disciplinary Proceeding by an Institution of Higher Education.**

This proposal, if passed, will allow for a victim of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking or intimate partner violence who is not a student or employee of an institution of higher education to be informed and participate in an investigation or disciplinary hearing involving a student or employee of said institution of higher education.

Students come from all over the globe to attend college in our state, and it is well known that college students hang out with many students who attend different schools, not just students from their respective university. This type of intercollegiate activity can be brought about through formal academic activities, like playing sports or collaborating on a project, or through attending a party at another school. Connections are made during our college years with more than just our immediate classmates, and many students frequent the campuses and dorms of their friends' schools if they are lucky enough to live close enough to do so. When college students visit a friend at a neighboring campus of another school, they deserve to do so under a relative expectation of safety and to seek justice in the event that they are victimized.

Many colleges and universities do not have a Code of Conduct that specifies the exclusion for non-student victims. Because this language is vague, it leads many non-students to believe they will be protected in the event they are harmed while on a college campus, or in the vicinity of a college dormitory, even if they are not a student at that school. While we have protections in place at our State Universities and Colleges that allow for a misconduct investigation and hearing process to take place in the event a student is harmed or has a grievance, the need for non-ambiguous language becomes an issue when one of the students attends another university and happens to become the victim of an alleged non-academic misconduct/assault. In cases like this, both parties deserve the chance to be part of the investigation and hearing process, and both parties deserve to know the outcome, even when one of the students attends another school. Excluding a student who reports being victimized by another student from the hearing process undermines the rights of the victim for due process and diminishes transparency for the university. We need to have uniformity and clear language in

our State Universities and Colleges' Codes of Conduct to help give equal rights to all victims of crimes, regardless of where they go to school, so they are not silenced in cases of alleged intimate partner violence.

It is my hope that the Committee will vote favorably to pass HB 5340 to allow third party victims to participate in any investigations or disciplinary proceedings at our Institutions of Higher Education, and I am thrilled to see this committee take the first step to help effect positive changes in this policy.