

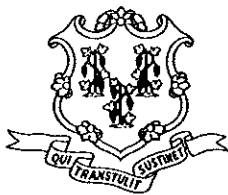
The Connecticut General Assembly

Task Force on Victim Privacy and the Public's Right to Know

Co-Chairs:

Rep. Angel Arce, State Representative, Hartford

Don DeCesare, President and General Manager of
WLIS-AM in Old Saybrook
and WMRD-AM in Middletown



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Wednesday, October 30, 2013, 11:00 am, Legislative Office Building, Room 1C Meeting of:

Task Force on Victim Privacy and the Public's Right to Know

Members Present: Rep. Angel Arce, Co-Chair; Don DeCesare, Co-Chair; Garvin Ambrose; Reuben F. Bradford; Sen. Eric Coleman; Klarn DePalma; William V. Dunlap; Sen. Leonard A. Fasano; Rep. Debra Lee Hovey; Kevin T. Kane; Jillian Knox; Brian Koonz; Jodie Mozder-Gil; Colleen Murphy; James Smith, Deborah DelPrete-Sullivan (attended as the substitute for Atty. Susan Storey) Andrew Woods

- I. Meeting convened at 11:08 am by Co-Chair Arce.
- II. Co-Chair Arce called for approval of minutes of the Public Hearing of October 16, 2013. Motion to approve the minutes made by Sen. Fasano and seconded by Jodie Mozdzer-Gil; motion approved.
- III. Co-Chair Arce introduced Bill Sherlach and Nicole Hockley, family members of 2 victims of the Sandy Hook shootings.

Mr. Sherlach whose wife, Mary, the school psychologist was a victim, described his wife as a hero who paid the ultimate price. He told the Task Force that they would make recommendations and move on, but for the families it would be a decision that would live on forever.

The families want protection from the 911 audio tapes; there can be a balance between privacy and the release of information. Mr. Sherlach quoted from OLR Attorney Reinhart who stated that sufficient reason for disclosure must be provided, there needs to be balance, each situation is different. This will require work, Mr. Sherlach reiterated that this will be a forever decision effecting 26 families.

Rep. Arce thanked Mr. Sherlach for his courage.

- IV. Nicole Hockley, mother of Dylan who was killed at Sandy Hook spoke next. Mrs. Hockley said no one can ever prepare themselves for this kind of horrific experience. She never thought any group would be seeking photos but when she became aware that this was happening and the legislature was considering a law protecting against releasing photos, she spent hours at the Capitol supporting the legislation. She stated that personal privacy and protection outweigh public interest. All media are not professional. These individuals with morbid curiosity are also seeking photos.

The entire town of Newtown has been traumatized and victimized by this unwarranted invasion of privacy. Mrs. Hockley implored the Task Force to recognize the rights and dignity of the victims' families.

- V. Discussion followed with questions from Sen. Fasano and Atty. Garvin Ambrose, and comments from Jim Smith and Kevin Kane.

Mr. Sherlach said that if the Task Force recommends release of photos and 911 tapes, families would mobilize. Mrs. Hockley said that she hoped that families would be made aware in advance.

Both family members reiterated that each case must be treated differently. Mrs. Hockley said that perhaps there could be filters helping to make these decisions.

Co-Chair Arce thanked Mrs. Hockley and Mr. Sherlach for speaking so courageously to the Task Force.

Co-Chair DeCesare added his gratitude and admiration of their courage as well.

- VI. Co-Chair DeCesare called for comment on tabled motion from Atty. Ambrose and amendments from Sen. Fasano and Atty. Storey, from previous meeting of October 16, re: Section 1, item B of P.A. 13-311.
- VII. Recess called at 11:45 am; Task Force reconvened at 11:55 am.
- VIII. Atty. Ambrose moved to retable the motion and amendments for the final time due to the absence of Atty. Storey. Kevin Kane asked that "final time" be removed from motion. Atty. Ambrose accepted this as a "friendly amendment"; seconded by Jodie Mozder-Gil. Motion approved.
- IX. Co-Chair DeCesare then posed several questions he and Co-Chair Arce have discussed. How will the final report be formatted should all agendas and minutes be included? Also minutes and reports, creating records for subsequent Task Forces. Sen. Fasano suggested that the information included on website was not necessary for republication in the final report of the taskforce due to its availability online. Rep. Hovey said information is usually archived. Clerk, Ken Neal will look into this question.

Co-Chair DeCesare said that while he is hopeful for a 17-0 vote, it is possible to have dissenting opinions. How would this be reported?

Jim Smith offered that there should be a majority and a minority report. Every member should have the right to express views in each report. Atty. Sullivan and Atty. Kane agreed. Professor Dunlap suggested a single report in which each issue would be discussed, one of many ways to do this.

- X. Further new business; Rep. Hovey stated she has been criticized for being too personally involved in the Task Force, but she feels strongly that it is the role of an elected official to be involved.

Co-Chair DeCesare expressed gratitude for the cordial manner in which meetings have taken place.

Co-Chair Arce said that now the public hearings are finished and the real work begins. He is looking forward to the Task Force coming up with its recommendations.

- XI. Sen. Fasano pointed out that the Task Force is scheduled to meet the day before Thanksgiving and perhaps it would be advisable to move the date of the meeting to Tuesday, November 26. Definite change will be decided at next meeting which will be held on Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at 11:00 am in room 1C of the LOB.

On a motion by Sen. Fasano, seconded by Rep. Hovey, meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Barbara Gordon
Asst. Clerk

Ken Neal
Clerk