



Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

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Testimony of Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

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Regarding Criminal Justice Reform Proposals 1-15

Submitted to the Judiciary Committee
Public Hearing, November 27, 2007

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Nancy Kushins and I am the Executive Director of Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS). Founded in 1983, CONNSACS is the statewide association of nine community-based rape crisis centers in Connecticut. Our mission is to end sexual violence and ensure high quality, comprehensive and culturally competent sexual assault victim services.

During fiscal year 2006-2007, CONNSACS' community-based program staff and volunteers provided services to 4,326 sexual assault victims and their families. Our member centers also provided risk reduction and prevention education to nearly 34,000 children and youth and to over 5,000 members of the general public and training for close to 2,500 professionals, including law enforcement personnel.

The Judiciary Committee is to be commended for their concerns related to victim and community safety, as well as for their commitment to holding offenders accountable. CONNSACS supports these efforts. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input. Our primary recommendation is to continue to proceed carefully while considering changes in order examine and avoid unintended consequences that could have a negative impact on victims.

I am submitting specific testimony on behalf of CONNSACS with respect to the following: *Proposal 4, An Act Concerning Home Invasion, Career Criminals, Community Supervision and Information Sharing Resources.*

CONNSACS strongly supports Section 12 of Proposal 4. It has been clearly demonstrated that technology deficits have severely limited the ability of various state agencies to

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communicate with one another. The development of a system of communication among agencies, departments, boards and commissions will not only enhance the criminal justice system's efficiency, it will also benefit victims. As CONNSACS has learned in our

longstanding and recently expanded role in the Sex Offender Supervision Units, the collaboration and exchange of information between and among Probation Officers, Sex Offender Treatment Providers and Victim Advocates has improved each of our operations and our effectiveness with the clients we serve.

Section 12 also references the development of a Criminal Justice Information System Commission and defines its membership. We would recommend that consideration be given to having a victim services/advocacy organization also serve as a member, such as the Office of Victim Services or the Office of the State Victim Advocate.

Thank you.