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Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Public Safety & Security Committee
Tuesday, February 17, 2015

Good morning Senator Larson, Representative Dargan and distinguished members of the Public Safety & Security 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:

> Proposed House Bill No. 6498, *An Act Concerning the Timely Transfer and Processing of Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits*

Current law requires each health care facility performing a sexual assault evidence collection kit to notify a law enforcement agency to collect the evidence and transfer to the state lab or to the Federal Bureau of Investigation laboratory. Although protocol has been established for the timely transfer of such evidence, many sexual assault evidence collection kits remain in the possession of law enforcement. A survey conducted by the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations found that many police departments had untested forensic exams kits in their possession, some more than five years old.

House Bill No. 6498 will require law enforcement to transfer a sexual assault evidence collection kit to the state lab within ten days, and further, will require the lab to analyze the evidence within sixty days. The timely transfer and analysis of such evidence is critical for the investigation of sexual assault complaints, the identification of perpetrators of sexual assault crimes and the successful prosecution of sexual assault criminal matters.

The Office of the Victim Advocate fully supports House Bill No. 6498 and urges the Committee's favorable report to ensure that victims of sexual assault are not further traumatized by the lack of processing such important evidence. Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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