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State Victim Advocate

Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Thursday, February 19, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate 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:

House Bill No. 6734, *An Act Concerning Surety Bail Bond Agents*

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) supports Section 4 of House Bill No. 6734 as it will require the Insurance Commissioner to establish continuing education requirements for surety bail bond agents and to identify the subjects to be covered by any training courses and the method by which such courses may be delivered.

The OVA has received complaints throughout the years from victims of domestic violence that involve surety bail bond agents providing a "ride home" to offenders they have bailed out of jail after a domestic violence arrest. In most cases of domestic violence, law enforcement officers will impose non-financial conditions of release upon an offender, to ensure the safety of the victim. As surety bail bond agents accept the responsibility of assuring an offender's appearance in court, the bail bond agent must also be mindful of the conditions imposed upon the offender relating to the offender's release and not inadvertently assist in the violation of such conditions.

Therefore, the OVA recommends that such training courses specifically include, at a minimum, domestic violence awareness and the various orders of protection (civil restraining order; criminal protective order; standing criminal protective order; civil order of protection; foreign orders of protection; and non-financial conditions of release).

Thank you for consideration of my testimony and suggested amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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