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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Hartford) State Victim Advocate Michelle Cruz, Esq., announced today that the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) is conducting a formal investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding the child abuse and sexual assault allegations of the nine adopted children of George Harasz and Douglas Wirth.

“The OVA is deeply concerned that the nine adopted children did not receive the appropriate services, oversight and assistance as the serious allegations of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault were reported on several occasions,” state Cruz. “Equally troubling is that the defendants have entered pleas of nolo contendere, pursuant to a plea agreement, that does not include a period of incarceration and lacks any accountability,” added Cruz.

The sixty-seven page transcript of the plea hearing is descriptive of years of abuse, neglect and sexual abuse at the hands of both George Harasz and Douglas Wirth. The proposed plea agreement, as recommended by the state, is that both defendants will receive a suspended sentence and either probation or a conditional discharge which is contingent upon the Court’s consideration of pre-sentence report arguments and evaluations of the defendants.

The OVA is mandated to review the policies and procedures of any state agency or other entity providing services to victims and further to conduct an investigation to identify gaps in services to victims. “These children are victims of crime and therefore are afforded constitutional rights, including the right to be reasonably protected from the accused,” said Cruz. “It appears that those responsible for the protection of these children failed to adequately investigate the claims and ensure that the appropriate services were available and provided to these children.”

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