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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Hartford) STATE VICTIM ADVOCATE MICHELLE CRUZ AGAIN APPEALS FOR THE IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF THE RISK REDUCTION EARNED CREDIT PROGRAM

“Once again, the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) has learned that the woman arrested by the New Britain Police Department for carjacking an elderly woman on Saturday evening was released early from prison as a result of the Risk Reduction Earned Credit program (RREC),” stated Michelle Cruz, State Victim Advocate. “Defendant Maryann Skwiot has accumulated an impressive criminal history dating back to 1992. Included in her history is a consistent pattern of failing to appear for scheduled court dates and for violating probation.”

Skwiot’s most recent conviction stems from a 2005 conviction for Robbery 1st in which she was sentenced to 10 years, suspended after serving 3 years; to be followed by 5 years probation. After serving just over 2 years, Skwiot was released by the Department of Correction to Community Supervision. Less than four months out, Skwiot violated her Community Supervision and was returned to custody. Still, four months later, Skwiot was again released, this time, to Parole Supervision until 7/20/2007. Consistent with her pattern of behavior, on 7/22/2008, Skwiot was charged with Violation of probation and later sentenced to 42 months jail followed by 2 years of Special Parole.

Cruz added, “From the information thus far, it is evident that Skwiot was released 158 days early after the application of RREC. Thankfully, Skwiot’s victim did not suffer serious physical injury. However, the impact of this crime will undoubtedly resonate not only with the victim, but the community as well. During a television interview, the victim said that she regretted her decision (to assist someone in need) and now has \$6,000 worth of damage to her vehicle. She added that she will likely never help others again.”

“I am again asking the Governor and the Commissioner of the Department of Correction to suspend the RREC program. What will it take, or how many lives and communities will be negatively impacted before the right thing is done?”

The OVA will continue to monitor those inmates released as a result of the RREC and will continue to highlight the failures of the RREC program. “Frankly, it has been a challenge for the OVA, with only three full time staff and one part time employee, to keep on top of tracking these inmates. And yet, it is a victims’ rights and public safety issue and one that desperately needs attention,” Cruz added.

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