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State Victim Advocate

Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Public Safety & Security Committee
Thursday, March 12, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Larson, Representative Dargan and distinguished members of the Public Safety and 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:

Senate Bill No. 1072, An Act Concerning Public Safety

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) was established to protect and promote the constitutional and statutory rights of crime victims throughout the criminal justice process. Among the rights afforded to crime victims is the right to receive restitution.

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 53a-28(c), if a person is convicted for an offense that resulted in injury to another person or damage to or loss of property, the victim may request financial restitution. If the court finds that the victim has suffered injury or damage to or loss of property as a result of such offense, the court **shall** order the offender to make financial restitution under terms that it determines are appropriate. Thus, as long as the pawnbroker, secondhand dealer or precious metals and stones dealer fulfills the above obligations, he or she would be considered a crime victim and the court is required to order restitution.

While the OVA empathizes with the struggle that a pawnbroker, secondhand dealer or precious metals and stones dealer may have in obtaining an order of restitution, the OVA must **oppose** Senate Bill No. 1072 because 1) there is a statute in place that addresses the pawnbrokers concerns as a crime victim, and; 2) it may unintentionally result in a pawnbroker's request superseding the request of any other victim seeking restitution in the same matter.

I urge the Committee to reject this proposal. Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,


Natasha M. Pierre, Esq.
State Victim Advocate