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*State Victim Advocate*

Testimony of Natasha M. Pierre, Esq., State Victim Advocate
Submitted to the Human Services Committee
Thursday, February 19, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services 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. 896, *An Act Concerning Protective Services for Suspected Elderly Abuse Victims*

Many difficult issues come before the Legislature with the hopes of improving a service, maintaining benefits for the impoverished, promoting a quality education for our children or, in this case, ensuring protection for elderly residents who may be exposed to abuse, neglect or exploitation. Unfortunately for this vulnerable population of victims, many are unaware of the abuse, deny the existence of abuse and/or refuse efforts to stop the abuse. Further and even more troubling, the abuse is often at the hands of a relative, caretaker or employee of a long-term care facility. Senate Bill No. 896 will strengthen the process for the investigation of reports of suspected elderly abuse, including instances where the elderly victim appears uncooperative.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) reported in its 2014 Annual Report receiving 356 report forms regarding residents of long-term care facilities and that agency social workers provided services to 4,104 persons living in the community. Regrettably, and in spite of Public Act. No. 2013-250 (Section 5), DSS does not expand on this information to include the types of reported abuse and the resolution of the complaints of abuse, including whether any criminal proceedings resulted from an investigation of abuse.

Senate Bill No. 896 will dramatically improve the state's response to complaints of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation and assist those who often are unable to help themselves. I strongly urge the Committee's favorable report. Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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