



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
**SENTENCING COMMISSION**

***Testimony of Alex Tsarkov on H.B. 7262, An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Connecticut Sentencing Commission With Respect To Victim Notification***

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, Senator Winfield, Senator McLachlan, Representative Stafstrom, Representative Rebimbas and members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is Alex Tsarkov and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission. I am here to testify in favor of H.B. 7262, An Act Concerning Recommendations of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission with Respect to Victim Notification.

Public Act 15-84 required the Connecticut Sentencing Commission to develop a proposal to address the needs of crime victims at sentencing. In response, the Commission convened a working group that consisted of the State Victim Advocate the Judicial Branch, the Chief State's Attorney's Office, the Division of Public Defender Services, and the Department of Correction. The working group's recommendation was reviewed and unanimously endorsed by the full Sentencing Commission in 2016. Its unanimous approval is significant since the commission's 23 members include judges, prosecutors, criminal defense counsel, the commissioners of the departments of Correction, Public Safety, and Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Victim Advocate, the executive director of the Judicial Branch-Court Support Services Division, municipal police chiefs, the chairperson of the Board of Pardons and Parole, the undersecretary of the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division of the Office of Policy and Management, and members of the public appointed by the governor and the leaders of the General Assembly. Thus, the Sentencing Commission represents all aspects of Connecticut's criminal justice system.

Although existing victim notification systems provide a wealth of useful post-conviction and pre-sentence information, crime victims would benefit further by having an understanding of a defendant's term of imprisonment and potential release date at the time of sentencing. Periods of incarceration and community supervision can be impacted by changes in the law or release mechanisms. Any advance information allows crime victims to plan for their own physical and mental health considerations, and address their safety concerns. This bill ensures that crime victims have increased access to information regarding a defendant's term of imprisonment and release date.

This is the same proposal the Sentencing Commission submitted in the 2016 legislative session (House Bill 5631). Last year, the Judiciary Committee gave the bill a unanimous favorable report and the House of Representatives passed the bill unanimously on May 3. The bill died on the Senate calendar on May 4, the last day of the session.

We thank the Committee for raising this important legislation and for your continued efforts to respond to the needs of crime victims. We urge the Committee's JOINT FAVORABLE Report.