



CONNECTICUT STATE  
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

**Testimony by Katie Kelley, Dean of Students  
Asnuntuck Community College**  
Board of Regents for Higher Education  
Connecticut State Colleges & Universities  
Before the Higher Education and Employment  
Advancement Committee  
February 11, 2014

Good Morning Senator Cassano, Representative Willis, Senator Boucher, Representative LeGeyt, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Katie Kelley and I am the Dean of Students at Asnuntuck Community College. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf the Board of Regents for Higher Education, and particularly the 12 community colleges in the system of Connecticut State Colleges and Universities regarding **HB 5029: An Act Concerning Sexual Assault and Intimate Partner Violence on Campus.**

These issues are of significant importance, and in addition to my role as Dean of Students, I also serve in a volunteer capacity as President of the Board for the Network Against Domestic Abuse in Enfield. Outreach, support, and prevention through education are my passion.

Let me first say, unequivocally, the Board of Regents is supportive of the intent of this legislation and is ready to work with any member of this committee or any group committed to improving institutional responses to reports of abuse or violence, as well as training and outreach to the campus community. What I would like to do is quickly point out some concerns specific to the community colleges and then, with my colleague Tom Clark, Assistant Counsel for the Board of Regents for Higher Education and a coordinator for many student affairs issues across our 17 institutions, answer any questions you have about our current practices or how we can best assist in meeting the goals of this proposal.

I encourage members of this committee to work with the Board to reexamine this Bill in light of the inherent differences that exist between major residential campuses and community colleges, not only differences created due to on-campus housing arrangements, or lack thereof, but differences in resources, staff, and expertise dedicated to serving a 24-hour-a-day campus versus institutions that operate on much more restricted schedules.

Community college campuses are non-residential and thus lack comprehensive mental health counseling services, physical health services and programming personnel for non-academic functions. These institutions rely heavily on referrals to community agencies that have the requisite expertise to assist students in need of sexual assault or domestic violence support. Additionally, many of our campuses rely on contract security services that lack the capability to participate in the kind of coordinated response envisioned by this legislation. Our students come to campus for classes while balancing careers, family and external obligations and spend minimal time on campus outside of their academic commitments, and our student service structures and abilities reflect that reality.

Given the differences between community colleges and university settings, I ask that you consider the following:

1. The proposed sexual assault response team – I encourage the committee to work with the Board to better define a membership group for the community colleges that recognizes that staff at the colleges may not serve in the functions outlined in the proposed makeup of these teams, or that the confidentiality of the victim of assault or abuse may be violated.
2. Reporting requirements – The committee should align reporting requirements with Clery Act requirements and reporting dates and consider the effect such reporting requirements have on the smallest institutions.
3. Memoranda of Understanding – Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS) provides a 24 hour hotline and a dedicated advocate for each campus. This partnership can include campus wide programming, faculty and staff training and intervention and support for victims as is currently the practice at Asnuntuck Community College. Strengthening and supporting this alliance negates the need for a series of MOUs across the system.

Incidences of sexual assault and intimate partner violence are all too prevalent in our society. Continued awareness and prevention efforts are greatly needed. The Community Colleges are dependent on the support of external agencies. Without on-campus mental health resources and appropriate campus security services, colleges face significant hurdles with respect to implementing this proposal. I believe that we can work together on small modifications to this proposal that take into account the focus and mission of our colleges, and will ultimately have a greater impact on meeting the laudable intent of the proposed legislation.

Thank you for your time today. Assistant Counsel Tom Clark and I will now be happy to answer any questions.