

**Testimony of Raymond Bechard  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Judiciary Committee  
April 15, 2013**

Good Afternoon, Chairman Coleman, Chairman Fox, and Committee members.

My name is Raymond Bechard. I am the author of a book called, "The Berlin Turnpike: A True Story of Human Trafficking in America," which focuses on these crimes in Connecticut. I'm here to urge your passage of Bill 6696, An Act Concerning Enhanced State Efforts to Prevent Human Trafficking.

Last year the legislature voted unanimously to protect young people against this scourge by addressing Escort advertisements like those in the Hartford Advocate. It wasn't until after that law went into effect last October that the Advocate finally removed those ads forever. I thank you for those efforts and I congratulate you on a job well done.

Now I'm asking you to go even further. 6696 will strengthen the law against human traffickers by giving prosecutors more powerful tools to bring these criminals to justice. It redefines the very act of human trafficking making it far more difficult for pimps in this slip through the legal system.

The best example of this is the Paris brothers. One brother, Dennis, was convicted of federal human trafficking charges in 2007 for selling young women out motel rooms on the Silas Deane Highway by advertising them in the Hartford Advocate. He is serving 30 years in an Arizona Federal penitentiary.

His brother, Jaykuan, a more violent pimp than Dennis, sold young women out motel rooms on the Silas Deane Highway by advertising them on the internet. Except Jaykuan had a partner: his wife Pearl, a Connecticut State Trooper. Jaykuan was only convicted by Connecticut for Promoting Prostitution and will probably serve about four years. Why the different outcomes? Connecticut's laws do not yet have the prosecutorial strength to withstand these crimes as we now understand them.

The law will also address the demand side of this crime by increasing the legal risk for the "Johns," the men who pay these pimps to have sex with the young women under their control. Men in Connecticut, men who think they are doing

no harm when they purchase these victims for a few minutes of abuse, may be looking at real jail time for *their* crimes.

Along with giving these victims legal recourse to expunge their previous criminal records, which Marie (WILL SPEAK ABOUT) (SPOKE ABOUT), this legislation also establishes a real, *working* task force whose sole purpose is to make legislative recommendations and initiatives designed to reduce and prevent human trafficking.

To protect the victims, to prevent these crimes, to prosecute these criminals, I urge you to vote favorably.

Thank you.