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Appointment of new Chief State's Attorney

Good afternoon Justice McDonald and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice Commission. 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 the appointment of the new Chief State's Attorney for the Division of Criminal Justice.

In 1996, Connecticut residents overwhelmingly voted to amend the constitution of the State of Connecticut to provide crime victims with constitutional rights throughout the criminal justice process. Throughout the last twenty-three years, there have been many positive advancements regarding the treatment of crime victims and the services available to crime victims, however, there is more important work that needs to be done.

Currently, the experience of many crime victims vary depending upon the Judicial District of which he/she may come in contact. There are no uniform policies and procedures with respect to the treatment of crime victims or the enforcement of crime victims' rights throughout the thirteen Judicial Districts. In fact, there are very few, if any, district wide policies and procedures. This is problematic for Connecticut crime victims as it should not depend on where the crime occurred for a crime victim to be treated with fairness and respect.

It is long past time that the Division of Criminal Justice formally adopt statewide policies and procedures for the fair and just treatment of crime victims and the enforcement of crime victims' state constitutional and statutory rights. The new Chief State's Attorney should have a strong interest in resolving the inconsistent treatment of crime victims throughout Connecticut.