

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Rep. Haddad Drives House Passage of Affirmative Consent Law

Bill expands sexual assault protections for college students

Rep. Gregg Haddad (D-Mansfield) praised passage of legislation that will create a uniform standard for consent in college investigations of sexual assault. HB 5376, AN ACT CONCERNING AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT, passed the House of Representatives today by a vote of 138-7.

Currently, Connecticut colleges have varying definitions of sexual consent. The legislation would require that all public and private universities adopt policies establishing affirmative consent as the standard. Affirmative consent is defined as an active, clear and voluntary agreement by a person to engage in sexual activity with another person.

“My education on this issue started with students at the University of Connecticut who were interested in preventing sexual assault. All college and university students deserve the same level of protection from sexual violence – a two-tier system is not acceptable,” **Rep. Haddad** said. “This bill will change the conversation on college campuses about what constitutes consent. There are many situations where an individual may be incapable of saying ‘no’ to sexual activity. Silence is not consent. This bill updates the standard for consent from ‘no means no’ to ‘yes means yes.’ ”

The bill clarifies that a past sexual relationship between two individuals does not indicate ongoing future consent. It also requires that colleges inform students of the affirmative consent standard in their awareness programming. Existing law requires that colleges offer programming on sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence.

“Hopefully this bill is a big step toward combatting sexual assault, which is far too prevalent on many campuses in Connecticut and across the nation,” said **Sen. Mae**

Flexer (D-Killingly). “These public discussions of a sometimes uncomfortable topic are necessary in order to create more understanding and higher expectations for our students. Sexual assault is not going to go away by itself; we need to be proactive, and we need to change the debate from ‘No means no’ to ‘Silence *doesn’t* mean yes—only yes means yes.”

“I am very pleased that we have passed this bill which adds to the hard working legacy of the members of the Higher Education Committee,” **Rep. Roberta Willis** (D-Salisbury) said. “As House Chair of the committee, I applaud the work of my colleague, Representative Haddad, as we continue to focus on policies that deal with addressing sexual violence on our college campuses.”

If the bill is approved by the Senate and signed into law, Connecticut would be only the third state in the country to enact affirmative consent legislation.

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