

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Rep. Diana Urban Supports Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking

Emphasizes the need to convict offenders at Informational Forum

Children's Committee Co-Chair Diana Urban (D-Stonington) spoke at a press conference and informational forum today about Connecticut's lack of convictions for human trafficking.

Held by the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Rep. Urban joined members of the Judiciary, Public Safety and Security, and Children's Committees for the joint forum. The topic was "Why No Convictions for Trafficking in Persons?"

"I would like to see a shift in focus from the supply side of the equation, meaning the prostitute or child who is the victim, to the demand side of the equation, meaning the person soliciting sex," said Rep. Urban. "There is a successful model that has been replicated in many localities and won the Harvard Innovation in Government Award that does exactly this. The fact that 400 youths have been victimized and referred to DCF without one state prosecution clearly indicates that we need to re-examine policy and procedure."

Trafficking in persons has been a felony charge in Connecticut since 2006, yet only 10 arrests, and no convictions, have been made under the statute. More than 400 victims of human trafficking have been referred to the Department of Children and Family Services since the law was enacted.

"From the testimony at the Forum, it appears that the state really needs to mirror the federal laws to maximize the ability to prosecute," said Rep. Urban. "I was also impressed by the work that DCF is doing in identifying and helping victims. It is clear that we know the problem but we need better tools to address outcomes."

The forum was held on the 10-year anniversary of the statute to discuss the lack of convictions and propose legislative and policy changes to encourage prosecution.

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