

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Contact: Giovanni Pinto
(860) 240-8575

LEGISLATORS & ADVOCATES CALL FOR VOTE ON STUDENT-LED CAMPUS SEXUAL VIOLENCE BILL

(HARTFORD, CT) – State **Representative Josh Elliott (D-Hamden)**, Chair of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, joined students and advocates to offer support for the immediate passage of [HB 6374 An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses](#) as legislators walk into the Capitol before session on Monday, May 24, 2021. Every Voice Coalition CT and the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence campus advocates will respond to the need for the legislation and ask for its immediate vote in the House.

Every Voice Coalition CT is a student organization leading advocacy for House Bill 6374, which would create a biennial statewide campus climate assessment and protect students with a statewide amnesty policy against drugs and alcohol. The legislation has 69 bipartisan co-sponsors, encompassing 40% of the House of Representatives and 25% of the Senate. The bill is championed by the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence and has received countless endorsements, including the ACLU of Connecticut, College Democrats of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Federation of College Republicans.

"Now is the time to pass HB 6374, and protect the lives of the students who helped champion and lead the drafting of this legislation," **Representative Elliott** said. "Each year college campuses experience higher rates of violence between the months of August and November, during what is referred to as the 'Red Zone'. In the wake of COVID-19 studies project that students will face a 'Double Red Zone' in the fall, experiencing potentially higher rates of violence as they navigate life trickling back to a sense of normalcy. It is vital we pass this bill during the 2021 session in order to keep our students safe. In this nearly year-and-a-half of uncertainty, stress, and obstacles brought on by the pandemic, I am proud of the tireless work done by these students to draft such an important and life-saving piece of legislation."

"House Bill 6374 represents the coming-together of students, advocates, educators, and legislators in the much-needed pursuit to advance student safety," said **Alison Hagani, Founder and Co-State Director of Every Voice CT**. "Data from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center found that 1 in 5 women, 1 in 16 men, and a disproportionate number of non-binary and trans students experience sexual violence during their time in college. While students seek to revel in their transformative college experience, sexual violence irreputably affects and impedes upon our lives and education. House Bill 6374 is the next step in disrupting this cycle of violence. As students like myself lead advocacy around our own right to feel safe, it is time for the legislature to honor our experiences by immediately passing House Bill 6374."

"I strongly affirm the powerful student-led bill, HB6374, An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on Campuses, and the tireless work of Every Voice Coalition CT to bring this student-community and campus accountability measure to a vote. In the wake of this pandemic's impact and distress on rising and current college students, we have a renewed urgency and responsibility to implement good policy to protect students who report being a victim or witness of assault, stalking or violence from disciplinary action, ahead of the dangerous 'Red Zone' period between Aug. and November, when the majority of sexual violence occurs on campuses. It is imperative that we as a legislature approve climate safety surveys as a norm for higher ed institutions in CT. I am proud to join the many cosponsors and urge immediate passage of this bill," said **Representative Anne Hughes**.

"We need this bill. It gives our Connecticut colleges and universities the tools necessary to address and end campus sexual misconduct. The regular assessments of campus climate gives administrations invaluable insight into students' experiences and the efficacy of current policies and practices. The amnesty provision can help to weed out those who repeatedly sexually harm by using alcohol to increase their victims' vulnerability and diminish the fear that victims have about reporting sexual misconduct. Victims will no longer need to fear reporting being harmed because they were under the influence at the time. Instead victims can get the help they need to deal with the trauma associated with sexual violence and focus on healing," said **Beth Hamilton, executive director of the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence**.

"HB 6374 is a monumental bill with bipartisan support," said **Representative Irene Haines**. "But what's most special about this is that college students on both sides of the aisle are advocating for this change. The fact that students have been the driving force for this legislation gives me faith in our future generation. And the sooner we bring this bill forth to pass it, they will have faith in our Representative form of government. I'm honored to be working with these stellar college students in making this change for the safety of all their fellow students on campuses everywhere."

This bill has received astounding bipartisan support throughout its committee votes and was previously shelved due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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