

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Public Hearing: March 4, 2025

In Support of **S.B. 977**: An Act Protecting Victims in Title IX Proceedings at Institutions of Higher Education

Dear Co-Chair Senator Slap, Co-Chair Representative Haddad, Ranking Member Senator Martin, Ranking Member Representative Bronko, Vice Chair Senator Gadkar-Wilcox, Vice Chair Representative Rochelle, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

I am testifying in support of S.B. 977 on behalf of The Connecticut Women’s Consortium, a Hamden-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and our mission to provide trauma-informed, gender-responsive education and advocate for the systems serving women to be accessible, effective, and inclusive.

We strongly support the proposed amendment to Section 10a-55m of the Connecticut General Statutes as it is a critical step in aligning our laws with the principles of trauma-informed and gender-responsive care. Gender-responsive care addresses the unique challenges individuals face based on gender, which aligns with removing barriers to reporting sexual violence—a issue that disproportionately affects college-aged women¹ and gender minorities². Similarly, trauma-informed care emphasizes safety, trust, and empowerment for people who have experienced trauma, principles reflected in this amendment’s protections against legal repercussions or institutional retaliation for those who report or testify in Title IX proceedings.

By removing the fear of civil and criminal litigation, this revision would make it easier for victims to come forward, reduce the risk of retraumatization in the form of legal liability, and foster an environment of open conversation about sexual violence and its ramifications on college campuses.

Supporting S.B. 977 will significantly enhance the justice landscape for victims of sexual violence and those who testify on their behalf, ensuring that they feel heard, supported, and protected.

Thank you,

Alana Valdez

Project Coordinator

The Connecticut Women’s Consortium

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1. <https://rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence>
2. [https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/sexual-violence-and-suicide-risk-among-lgbtq-young-people/#:~:text=Additionally%2C%20transgender%2C%20nonbinary%2C%20and,cisgender%20LGBQ%20peers%20\(31%25\).](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/sexual-violence-and-suicide-risk-among-lgbtq-young-people/#:~:text=Additionally%2C%20transgender%2C%20nonbinary%2C%20and,cisgender%20LGBQ%20peers%20(31%25).)