

Introduction

My name is Armina Medic and I have worked as a victim advocate at the Chittenden County State's Attorney office for the past 14 years.

Six years ago, I was assigned to CUSI. On daily basis I work closely with survivors of sexual assaults.

Some of the Difficulties victims face when deciding to report are:

Fear of being ostracized, judged, not believed or retaliated against are some of the many reasons why victims choose not to come forward. Even if they come forward, they often feel self-doubt, blame, shame and humiliation.

Deciding to come forward even after utilizing support services is an extremely difficult decision. There is lack of privacy and being retraumatized as someone goes through a system focused on their behavior, often feeling like there are the ones on trial.

After reporting challenges and difficulties

If the victim /survivor reports the assault, there is no guarantee that the perpetrator is going to be held accountable. Some of the cases don't meet the burden of proof, enough evidence to go forward, and the prosecutor and I have to make those dreading phone calls to survivors breaking the news.

When charges are brought against a perpetrator, it doesn't mean the case will end in conviction.

The Defense in these cases often attacks the victim's credibility he-said/she-said and other aspects of their lives, taking the focus away from who's really on trial.

We all know these crimes often happen behind closed doors not to mention the incapacitation, intoxication, and lack of or spotty memory that that also may be factors

This long process leaves victims' questioning if it was even worth reporting. Even if the result is conviction, there is no guarantee that appeal won't happen.

Bill H.183

This bill will not solve all of these problems, but it will definitely clarify the law around the consent.

It will validate the experiences of survivors that have not come forward, and hopefully Encourage the victims who were facing those challenges to come forward.