



# 2015 CONNECTICUT LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE



Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.  
96 Pitkin Street • East Hartford, CT 06108  
[www.CONNSACS.org](http://www.CONNSACS.org) • (860)282-9882  
[info@CONNSACS.org](mailto:info@CONNSACS.org)

JULY 2015

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## FUNDING FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT CRISIS SERVICES

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**STATUS**

[File no. 800](#)

**PASSED AS**

[HB 6824](#)

**EFFECTIVE**

July 1, 2015

### CONNECTICUT STATE BUDGET FUNDING

#### State Budget Funding

Budget talks this year began with the Governor's budget presentation which called for a \$200,000 cut to the "Rape Crisis" line item (32%) that funds services for victims of sexual violence in Connecticut. The legislative budget restored \$195,000 to that line item, which was upheld during the special session to pass the budget implementers. Thanks to this restoration, CONNSACS and member programs will be able to continue to offer the same level of services to victims and survivors of sexual assault in Connecticut.

(Click [here](#) for more information)

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## SEXUAL ASSAULT EVIDENCE COLLECTION

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**STATUS**

[PA 15-207](#)

**PASSED AS**

[HB 6498](#)

**EFFECTIVE**

Oct 1, 2015


### CLEAR TIMEFRAMES FOR KIT TRANSFER AND TESTING

#### All Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits Shall Be Sent to the Crime Lab

This legislation, which passed unanimously, ensures that all sexual assault evidence collection kits will be transferred to the state crime lab within 10 days of collection and that the kits will be tested by the lab within 60 days. The bill is now awaiting the governor's signature. Connecticut now joins only a handful of states that have codified into law clear timeframes for kit transfer and testing. CONNSACS will coordinate with the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations and the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association to update kit consent forms and technical guidelines to reflect these changes. The new law will take effect on October 1, 2015.

Though this new law will help prevent future backlogs in kit transfer and testing, there is still a current backlog that must be addressed. Through a recent survey, the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault

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## SEXUAL ASSAULT EVIDENCE COLLECTION (Cont.)

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### **CLEAR TIMEFRAMES FOR KIT TRANSFER AND TESTING (Cont.)**

Investigations identified over 800 unsubmitted and untested sexual assault evidence collection kits at municipal police departments and state police departments across Connecticut. CONNSACS will continue to be the leading voice in addressing the kit backlog and advocating for best practices in the collection of evidence and investigation of sexual assault cases.

(Click [here](#) for more information)

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## VICTIM PRIVACY

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#### STATUS

[PA 15-207](#)

### **PROTECTING A VICTIM'S PRIVACY IN COURT**

#### **Strengthening Rape Shield Protections**

This bill amends Connecticut's current Rape Shield Law which protects a victim's previous sexual history from being used by the defense. When the defense chooses to challenge the Rape Shield Law, the hearing on that motion is now required by law to be held in private (in camera), away from the press and the public. This law will take effect October 1, 2015.

(Click [here](#) for more information)

#### EFFECTIVE

Oct 1, 2015

#### STATUS

[PA 15-213](#)

### **DISSEMINATION OF INTIMATE IMAGES**

#### **New Criminal Code Protects Intimate Images**

This new law identifies intentional dissemination of intimate photos, film, videos, or other recorded images of a person without that person's consent as a class A misdemeanor. It also expands protections for victims of voyeurism by expanding the definition of voyeurism, expanding sex offender registry requirements for voyeurism, extending the statute of limitations for reporting voyeurism, increasing possible probation terms for voyeurism, and extending personal information protections for sexual assault victims to include victims of voyeurism. This new legislation will go into effect October 1, 2015.

(Click [here](#) for more information)

#### EFFECTIVE

Oct 1, 2015



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## VICTIM SERVICES AND PROTECTIONS

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**STATUTE**

[PA15-16](#)

**PASSED AS**

[SB 966](#)

**EFFECTIVE**

Oct 1, 2015

### SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EXAMINERS ON CAMPUS

#### SAFE Program Expanded to Include the University of Connecticut

The State of Connecticut Office of Victim Services Gail Burns Smith Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Program is expanding to serve victims of sexual assault at the University of Connecticut. Now the SAFE experts will be able to provide immediate care and treatment to sexual assault victims at the health center on the Storrs campus.

(Click [here](#) for more information)

**STATUS**

[PA 15-195](#)

**PASSED AS**

[HB 6849](#)

**EFFECTIVE**


Oct 1, 2015

### PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

#### Better Access to Resources

The Department of Public Health must now afford victims of human trafficking the same services it must provide to sexual assault victims, including counselling regarding Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), HIV testing and referrals for health care and support services. The new law also broadens the definition of human trafficking of minors, specifying that trafficking of a minor occurs when the offender compels or induces a minor to engage in conduct involving more than one occurrence of sexual contact with one or more third persons that constitutes prostitution or sexual contact for which the third person may be charged with a criminal offense. "Sexual contact" is defined as any contact with another person's intimate parts. In addition, minors may petition to have more time to file applications for victim compensation.

(Click [here](#) for more information)



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## VICTIM SERVICES AND PROTECTIONS (Cont.)

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**STATUS**

[PA 15-205](#)

**PASSED AS**

[HB 6186](#)

**EFFECTIVE**

Oct 1, 2015

### STRICTER MANDATED REPORTING RULES IN SCHOOLS

#### More Accountability, Stricter Penalties

Mandated reporters who fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families will now face a class E felony penalty (formerly a class A misdemeanor). The legislation also expands reporting requirements for school employees to report suspected abuse or neglect for high school students over 18 years of age who are not enrolled in adult education. It also creates a class D felony penalty for interfering with such reporting. In addition, by January 1, 2016, each Board of Education must coordinate with the Department of Children and Families to establish a confidential rapid response team to ensure prompt reporting and response for child abuse and neglect and sexual assault.

(Click [here](#) for more information)

**STATUTE**

[PA 15-56](#)

**PASSED AS**

[SB 428](#)

**EFFECTIVE**


Oct 1, 2015

### INTERNS PROTECTED FROM WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

#### Unpaid Interns Receive Similar Protections as Paid Employees

This new law makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against or sexually harass unpaid interns. The protections are similar to those afforded to paid employees. If an intern believes that they have experienced discrimination or sexual harassment, they may file a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities and take the matter to the Superior Court as a civil action.

(Click [here](#) for more information)



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## VICTIM SERVICES AND PROTECTIONS (Cont.)

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**STATUTE**

[Special Act  
15-2](#)

### SEXUAL OFFENDER REGISTRATION SYSTEM STUDY

#### The Connecticut Sentencing Committee to Perform System Study

**PASSED AS**

[SB 1087](#)

**EFFECTIVE**

Oct 1, 2015

The Connecticut Sentencing Committee will begin a study of the systems that affect sexual offenders and their victims. The study will include an examination of sexual offender sentencing, risk assessment and management, registration requirements, recidivism, housing, victim and survivor needs and services, community education and more. The study will begin October 1, 2015 and the final report will be submitted to the General Assembly on December 15, 2017.

(Click [here](#) for more information)

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## BILLS OF NOTE

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The following entries are bills of note that CONNSACS supported or monitored that did not become law in the 2015 Legislative Session.


**[SB 636](#)**

### AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT TO DETERMINE CONSENSUAL SEXUAL ACTIVITY

#### Applying a Consistent Standard at Connecticut's Colleges and Universities

This bill would have required all of the Connecticut's institutions of higher learning to adopt similar policies already in place at several of the state's major universities, including the requirement that they adopt a standard of "affirmative consent" when determining if sexual activity is consensual. In this bill, "affirmative consent" is defined as an active, clear, and voluntary agreement by a person to engage in sexual activity with another person. The agreement must be sustained throughout the sexual activity and may be revoked at any time by any person.

(Click [here](#) for more information)



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## BILLS OF NOTE (Cont.)

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**[SB 650](#)**

### **PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS WHO APPLY FOR ORDERS OF PROTECTION AND TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDERS**

#### **Strengthening Procedures to Protect Victims**

This bill would have expanded protections for victims applying for and receiving orders of protection and temporary restraining orders. It would have changed the application to include a section where the applicant can indicate whether the accused possessed a firearm. It would have also mandated that the firearm be surrendered when the police officer served the order.

(Click [here](#) for more information)

**[SB 706](#)**  
**[SB 204](#)**

### **PROTECTIONS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**

#### **Mandated Reporting and Notification**

These bills would have added certified emergency medical technicians as mandated reporters for suspected elder abuse or neglect. In addition, they would have required the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to notify a director of a senior center if a registered sex offender is released or moves the their community. The DESPP must already send such notification to school superintendents and municipal chiefs of police.

(Click [here](#) for more information on SB 706)

(Click [here](#) for more information on SB 204)


**[HB 6932](#)**

### **EXPANSION OF PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

#### **Creation of the Family Medical Leave Compensation Program**

This bill would have created the Family Medical Leave Compensation Program which would provide wage replacement for employees taking leave under Connecticut's Family and Medical Leave Act, the family violence leave law, or the state employee family medical leave law. The bill also amended those programs to expand the employers that must comply with the law and to change the duration calculations for those taking leave.

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## BILLS OF NOTE (Cont.)

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### EXPANSION OF PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (Cont.)

Though the bill itself did not pass in the regular session, the Budget Implementer bill, which was passed during the 2015 Special Legislative Session, included language to further investigate options for a paid family and medical leave program. The Labor Commissioner in consultation with the State Treasurer, State Comptroller, and the Commissioner of Administrative Services were directed to establish the procedures necessary to implement the program. This group was also directed to hire a consultant to perform an actuarial analysis. The Labor Commissioner will submit a report on the plan by February 1, 2016.

(Click [here](#) for more information on HB 6932)

(Click [here](#) for more information on the special session implementer section 422)

