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Good Morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and express my concerns on this very important issue.

In August 1993, a stranger broke into my house, and raped me. I can stand here today, almost seven years later, and remember it like it was yesterday. More than remembering the physical attack, I can remember clear as a bell, how I was feeling and what I was thinking. I remember thinking I am going to die. I could not take my eyes off the knife he was holding in front of my face as he raped me. In my mind the fact that he was looking at me and I could see him, he was talking to me meant he was going to have to kill me. He raped me in different rooms in my home and when it was over, he told me to go to my bedroom and lock myself in it. He would retrieve his knife and then go. I ran to my room and closed the door. I leaned against the door waiting for him to barge in and kill me. I got myself dress but could not come out of my room. I was sure he was hiding in the house waiting to finish me off. I left my home through a window and ran to a neighbor's home. As I sat there feeling safe, it dawned on me, that maybe no one would believe me. I looked at myself, NO stab wounds, NO Bruises. Who was going to believe this story? Why would I ever think such a thing? Why? Society had told me so. Every movie produced told me so. Every evening television drama told me so. The daytime soap opera's had told me so. " If I was crying rape it had to be a lie."

False reports to law enforcement agencies are harmful. One of the most devastating reports being that of Sexual Assault. Can we understand or know what it is like to be accused, interrogated, and arrested for a heinous crime we did not commit? I believe we can empathize, but we truly can not know it. After all we have not experienced it.

When the truth comes out are we not glad? Don't we say things like "that poor man! At least now it's over". But is it? He becomes the victim now. He will forever live with the devastation, humiliation and the loss of control over his life.

The one accused, is not the only victim. Let us not forget the TRUE Rape victim. False reporting hurts them. I know, because I experienced it.

It is very frustrating telling the truth and not knowing whether or not your being believed. I remember during trail, telling my story, my rapist lying, denying it was him. I hoped and prayed the Judge would believe my story. I was so angry and

frustrated. The truth never changes. The truth is the same story over and over. What more did they want me to say. I can imagine the frustration in being accused falsely and telling the truth, and no one believing you.

One of the first books I bought after my rape was Linda Fairstein's "Sexual Violence" our war against rape. She has directed the Sex Crimes Prosecution Unit within the Manhattan D.A.'s office for more than fifteen years. In it she devotes a chapter to this very issue. Chapter eighteen - "False reporting - A terrible foe of the Rape Victim." She ends this chapter with 3 main points; I'd like to read to you now. She writes:

<sup>1</sup>"First, these fabrications (which are themselves criminal acts) waste the time and resources of an already overtaxed justice system. Most municipalities do not have the manpower to respond to and fully investigate many real crimes, and therefore for each false alarm that is sounded, some legitimate victim goes unaided."

<sup>1</sup>"Second, for each false report that results in an arrest, a man is imprisoned - whether for hours, days, or months- when he has committed no offense. "

<sup>1</sup>"And most important, to me, is that these falsehoods degrade and trivialize the experience of every legitimate rape survivor who will ever tell her story to a police officer or jury. They encourage the ignorance and callousness of people who still fail to see the extent and significance of the problems of rape. Each false accusation makes to many skeptics think that every accusation is a false one - which is a danger that cannot be overstated. False reporters are among the worst foes of real rape victims, and the deadliest enemies of legal protection for women everywhere."

I now ask you to take this seriously, with great consequences. House Bill 106 is a critical Bill. Not only for the accused, nor the true rape victim, but also for all of society. Thank you for listening to my experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Sexual Violence by Linda Fairstein copyright 1993