



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 570

January Session, 2003

Substitute House Bill No. 5033

House of Representatives, April 29, 2003

The Committee on Judiciary reported through REP. LAWLOR of the 99th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING STATUTORY INTERPRETATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2003*) The meaning of a statute
2 shall, in the first instance, be ascertained from the text of the statute
3 itself and its relationship to other statutes. If, after examining such text
4 and considering such relationship, the meaning of such text is plain
5 and unambiguous and does not yield absurd or unworkable results,
6 extratextual evidence of the meaning of the statute shall not be
7 considered.

This act shall take effect as follows:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2003</i>
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JUD *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Type	FY 04 \$	FY 05 \$
Various	Various - Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 04 \$	FY 05 \$
Various Municipalities	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate

Explanation

The bill prescribes the manner in which the court must interpret statutory language. Any resulting fiscal impact is indeterminate.

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5033

AN ACT CONCERNING STATUTORY INTERPRETATION**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires that a statute's meaning be initially determined from its text and relationship to other statutes. It prohibits use of evidence of meaning from outside the text if the text is plain and unambiguous and does not yield absurd or unworkable results.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2003

BACKGROUND***Related Case***

In *State v. Courchesne*, the Connecticut Supreme Court (by a 5 to 2 vote) rejected the common law "plain meaning rule" for statutory interpretation, which states that when a statute's language is plain and unambiguous, the court cannot go beyond the text to consider other sources of meaning. They adopted an approach to statutory interpretation that requires the court to consider all relevant sources of meaning (such as legislative history, legislative purpose, and the statute's context) in addition to the statutory language without any requirement of finding ambiguity (262 Conn. 357 (2003)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 41 Nay 0