

Connecticut Council for Divorce Mediation and Family Dispute Resolution

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March 8, 2006

Senator Andrew McDonald, Co-Chair
Representative Michael Lawlor, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Judiciary
Legislative Office Building, Room 2500
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Raised Bill 430: An Act Concerning Arbitration of Family Matters

Dear Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and Members of the Committee:

We, Barbara D. Aaron, J.D., and Donald J. Hiebel, Ph.D., Co-Presidents of the Connecticut Council for Divorce Mediation and Family Dispute Resolution (CCDM), urge you to reject Raised Bill 430: An Act Concerning Arbitration in Family Matters.

CCDM is a multi-disciplinary, statewide organization of over 100 family dispute resolution professionals. The Practitioner Members of our organization have attained professional degrees in their professions of origin, such as law, social work, psychology, marriage and family therapy or accounting. They have specialized training in family dispute resolution, significant experience in family dispute resolution, and they are committed to ongoing learning through continuing education and adhering to codified Standards of Practice.

Our organization believes that consumers of arbitration services can best be protected by assuring that arbitrators are competent and adhere to standards of practice and ethics rather than by limiting the profession of origin of arbitrators. Competent practitioners, as we have witnessed within our organization, come from diverse educational and professional backgrounds. The American Arbitration Association (AAA), the premier national arbitration organization, also focuses on competence rather than profession of origin, stating that qualifications for arbitrators should be that they are "proficient neutrals" of any profession of origin who have education, training in arbitration and/or other forms of dispute resolution, extensive professional experience, and are dedicated to upholding the AAA Code of Ethics for Arbitrators and/or Standards of Conduct for Mediators.

The Connecticut Council for Divorce Mediation and Family Dispute Resolution thanks you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Sincerely,



Barbara D. Aaron, J.D., and Donald J. Hiebel, Ph.D., Co-Presidents
Connecticut Council for Divorce Mediation and Family Dispute Resolution

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