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To: The Joint Committee on the Judiciary

**Written Testimony in Support of Raised Bill No. 7039—Concerning
Public Access to Proceedings in Certain Juvenile Matters**

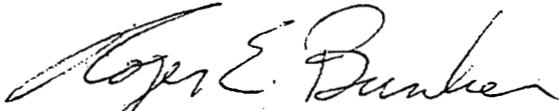
My name is Roger E. Bunker. I am a resident of Bloomfield, CT, As an attorney, I have practiced in the areas of Juvenile Law and Special Education since 1995. I have also been an active member of the Connecticut Bar Association's Children and the Law Committee; the Bloomfield Youth Adult Council; and the Board of Covenant to Care for Children, a statewide not-for-profit organization that provides basic goods and services to abused and neglected children.

I support this Bill because I believe that it will significantly improve the quality of judicial outcomes in Connecticut's juvenile courts. During the last several years, I have represented clients in the juvenile courts in Hartford, Rockville, Willimantic, Middletown, and New Britain. During that period, I have frequently observed attorneys, social workers, and judges who have not been adequately prepared or who were rushing through one case to get to the next. I believe that opening the juvenile courts to public scrutiny will help to improve the performance of all parties. Also, the attendance in court of family members and friends will benefit many children and their parents. When relatives and friends are allowed to become fully informed about a child's situation, they may be able to provide more support to both the child and the parents that would improve the outcomes for the child. For a variety of reasons, including language and stress, many parents have difficulty understanding everything that is said in the court room and would benefit from the opportunity to discuss these matters with trusted friends or relatives after a hearing.

Raised Bill No. 7039 grants the court the necessary power to exclude members of the public from a court room when there are

compelling reasons to do so and provides clear criteria for exclusion.

I recommend this Bill because it clearly benefits the parties, especially the children, and establishes safeguards to protect them when necessary.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roger E. Bunker". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Roger E. Bunker
Attorney at Law