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Testimony of
Eunice G. DiBella
Public Records Administrator
Connecticut State Library
Concerning Raised Bill 7152

“An Act Concerning the Recording of Instruments by Town Clerks”

The Office of Public Records Administrator supports Raised Bill No 7152 “An Act Concerning the Recording of Instruments by Town Clerks.” This bill addresses three important issues concerning the content and format of Connecticut Land Records. The first deals with the issue of the placement of manual notations on the land records indicating the release of liens and judgments. The second and third issues deal with the size of the margins and the requirement to place the ‘return to’ and preparer’s name and address on the top of the front side of the first page of each instrument presented to the town clerk for recording on the land records.

The requirement to make manual marginal notations on land records has become outdated and unnecessary with the universal use of computerized land indexes and the utilization of imaging systems as a method of recording instruments on the land records. Currently, when an instrument is presented for recording, it is entered into an electronic imaging system. The images are then converted to microfilm for security purposes. The microfilm is stored offsite in a secure vault. If a book is either stolen or lost, which unfortunately has occurred over the years, the book is recreated out of the microfilm. Since it is impossible to make notations on the microfilm, without destroying the integrity of the film, we have a system where the “original books” and the archival backup differ.

Current technology has rendered the marginal notation obsolete. Computerized indexing consisting of a chronological order of events in one computerized location is sufficient, and it is forward thinking to a time when towns may no longer produce paper books.

The requirement for a minimum width for the margin of an instrument is important. I often hear complaints from town clerks who do not have sufficient space to place a time, date and page stamp on the face of the instrument as required by statute. It is for this reason that I urge you to institute this requirement.

Accordingly, the placement of the ‘return to’ and preparer’s name and address on the top of the front side of the first page of each instrument makes good sense for future tracking purposes and as well urge it’s passage.

These three legislative proposals offer benefits not only to town clerks but to land record customers as well.