



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

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**Testimony of Deborah J. Fuller
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
April 9, 2007**

**House Bill 7405, An Act Concerning the Court Support Services
Division of the Judicial Branch**

Good afternoon. My name is Deborah Fuller and I appear before you today on behalf of the Judicial Branch to testify in support of **House Bill 7405, An Act Concerning the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch**. This proposal was submitted by the Branch as part of its legislative package.

This proposal would clarify that the language enacted last year regarding space for probation officers in contractors' facilities applies to existing, as well as new, contracts. This provision is essential to the Judicial Branch. Over the past three years we have been fortunate enough to hire, pursuant to legislative authorization, approximately one hundred twenty additional adult probation officers. This has created a great demand for office space, a demand that the state's leasing process simply cannot keep up with. We have submitted requests for space that are going through the Department of Public Works process, but anticipate that it will be quite some time before the space can be provided.

It is of great benefit to hire additional probation officers, thereby allowing more effective supervision and intervention. However, each of these officers needs to have an office! Ideally, each officer would have a private office to allow for confidentiality when meeting with clients. However, at the present time we are struggling to provide even shared offices. The need is more critical in some parts of the state than others, depending on what existing Judicial Branch facilities are in the area. We intend to use

this provision, which would allow the Judicial Branch to amend the contracts that we currently have with private providers, to allow them to provide office space in those areas where the officers are on board but the office space is not. It goes without saying that we will compensate the providers for the space. We requested authorization for this last year; however, the language that was enacted did not apply to existing contracts and therefore was of very limited assistance. We need this language to allow us to amend existing contracts, since many of them are in the middle of a 5-year cycle.

In addition, this proposal would eliminate the requirement that any contract entered into by the Judicial Branch for electronic monitoring services, which includes GPS, include a \$6.00 cap on the cost for such services. This is not workable. Currently, the cost of GPS is \$6.46 per day, but this cost fluctuates with the volume used -- the price is calculated based on number of units. The requested language would allow the necessary flexibility. In addition, we would respectfully request that the language on line 17 be amended to add "in whole or in part" after "fee." In light of the fact that individuals could be on electronic monitoring for a substantial period of time, we believe the court should be allowed to review the fee waiver during that period in order to determine if it is still appropriate.

In conclusion, I urge the Committee to act favorably on this proposal. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.