

Co-chairs, Sen. McDonald and Rep. Lawlor, and members of the Judiciary Committee,
My written testimony is in opposition to in response to proposed bill S.B. 1272

This bill as proposed presents numerous, additional complications to a system that is considered by many to be one of the few governmental agency that best serve our constituents in the most efficient manner. That is not to say it doesn't have it faults, but by enacting this bill into legislation we will basically take the local control of the daily operation of the individual courts and virtually set up a mini superior court system. If this is the direction that the legislature choose to go in why bother with this subsystem. The Probate Court might just as well be merged and included in the Judicial Budget.

Section 1(a) places what may turn out to be a substantial financial burden on individual towns to support a new endeavor by Probate Administrator Office to record probate court records in a new technological manner. This system has been placed in various points around the state paid out of the Probate Administration Fund. I would venture to guess that the cost has been sufficient, and perhaps the legislators could ascertain the exact cost to date before placing this mandate on the towns or be faced with the likelihood that their court would be forced to close for non compliance.

Many other areas of this proposed bill would seem to clearly indicate that giving the Probate Administrator such a carte blanc power to determine on an individual basis what court complies with vague requirements and which one do not is a back door to forced consolidation.

I do believe that setting specific cohesive guidelines to bring a sense of unity to the Probate Court System is a good thing. Perhaps the Probate Administrator needed to go Further with this idea and require all Attorney Probate Judges, especially those serving the large communities, refrain from having a private practice. This would alleviate the public outcry of conflict of interest. This would also provide a Judge on call at the court full time for what is reported as an unbalanced heavy workload burden.

I would respectfully request that the legislators carefully review each area of this bill to ferret out and analyze portions that would likely wreck havoc on a court system that truly serves our people in an efficient and compassionate manner.

Respectfully Submitted
Hon. Jeannette Puglio
Judge of Probate
Town of Roxbury