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To: Senate Co-Chair Andrew McDonald
House Co-Chair Michael Lawlor
Senate Ranking Member John Kissel
House Ranking Member Arthur O'Neill
Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Judge James J. Lawlor
Probate Court Administrator

Re: RB 7382 An Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage for Probate Court
Judges and Employees

Date: March 30, 2007

Health care costs are a driving factor in the financial crisis the Probate Court System now faces. Last year, the health insurance cost of active judges and employees was over \$3 million. The increase has averaged between 12% and 14 % in the past three years.

Any relief from this considerable burden would benefit the probate system and would be welcomed. However, health care costs are only one piece of the financial puzzle. Addressing health care costs without considering the system's other problems and inefficiencies would offer only limited, short-term relief.

I believe that a proper resolution of the financial problems of the probate system must be comprehensive. While I would welcome the relief afforded by this bill, it must be part of a more comprehensive package addressing the wider financial issues facing the probate courts.