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**TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MARCH 3, 2008**

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 5531, An Act Adopting the Revised Uniform Arbitration Act. This proposal would establish procedures for arbitration in the state of Connecticut where the parties agree to arbitration. The process is designed to establish basic standards of fairness.

I urge the committee to consider passing this legislation with amendments to explicitly exempt Lemon Law and state labor arbitration procedures which are currently subject to specific statutory rules.

Currently, state law establishes specific and distinct rules of procedure for conducting arbitration proceedings in Lemon Law and state labor disputes. These rules differ from the procedures in the Uniform Arbitration Act. For example, under that portion of the current arbitration statute which is incorporated into the Lemon Law, an appeal from a Lemon Law arbitration award must be filed within 30 days. Under the Act, the time period is extended to 90 days, adding another 2 months for the consumer to wait for the manufacturer to decide whether to appeal or to replace the consumer's motor vehicle. Therefore, the Act must be modified to incorporate only selected portions of the appeals process from the new Act and to add supplementary language to both the Lemon Law and labor statutes to preserve the current appeals process and timetables.

Although arbitration can be a less expensive, quicker process for resolving legal claims, it has become a tool used by corporations to force consumers to present their claims before an out of state adjudicator, using another state's laws, and foregoing other legal rights and protections.

I urge the committee to favorably consider House Bill 5531 only with the critical amendments discussed in this testimony.