



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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**Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 10, 2008**

**House Bill 5875, An Act Concerning The Protection Of Family Violence
Victims In Family Relations Matters**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch in regards to *House Bill 5875, An Act Concerning the Protections of Family Violence Victims in Family Relations Matters*. The Judicial Branch has concerns with the bill as drafted.

Under current law, Superior Court judges have the authority to enter Temporary Restraining Orders (TRO's) to protect parties and children. TRO's are uniquely tailored orders designed to protect individuals from an imminent risk of harm; a TRO is also entered into a national registry. Since the court already possesses the necessary tools to ensure one's safety through a focused TRO proceeding, it is unclear what would be gained by the first provision of the bill.

The Judicial Branch is also concerned with the provision of the bill that would permit children to "participate in the proceedings" and the provision regarding video conferencing. First, it is unclear as to what is intended by allowing a child to "participate", short of the appointment of counsel. As for videoconferencing, this equipment is currently available in only a few courts. The cost to purchase and install such equipment would need to be taken into consideration, as well as any potential need for additional staff to operate the equipment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.