



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION**

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**Testimony of Deborah J. Fuller  
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing  
March 20, 2008**

**House Bill 5920, An Act Concerning Small Claims Housing Matters**

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to address, on behalf of the Judicial Branch, **Senate Bill 5920, An Act Concerning Small Claims Housing Matters**. We are opposed to this proposal, which would return housing-related small claims matters to the housing courts.

As members of the Committee may be aware, the Judicial Branch is experiencing a serious backlog in the processing of small claims matters. This backlog is largely due to two factors: a dramatic increase in filings - from 72,000 annually to 90,000 annually - which has occurred since the jurisdictional amount was raised by the legislature in 2005, and a severe staff shortage.

To address this problem, Judge Barbara Quinn has announced the formation of a task force to conduct a top-to-bottom assessment of the small claims docket and has invited a diverse group of individuals to participate.

We would respectfully ask that the Judiciary Committee not take action on this bill; please allow the task force to complete its work and make its recommendations. A half-measure, such as the one proposed in this bill, could have unintended consequences for the housing docket without making any beneficial impact on the small claims docket.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.