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**Written Testimony of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz
Judiciary Committee
March 19, 2008**

Good Afternoon Chairman Lawlor, Chairman McDonald and members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is Susan Bysiewicz and I am the Secretary of the State. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of **S.B. #605: An Act Concerning Judicial Branch Openness.**

First, I want to commend this Committee for consistently pursuing judicial reforms and for publicly raising and hearing such a significant proposal. During my tenure as the Secretary of the State and as the former Co-chair of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, I have been a strong supporter of overhauling Connecticut's ethics code for elected and public officials and instituting government reforms in all branches and levels of state government in order to restore the public's trust.

The need to extend transparency and openness to the Judicial Branch in order to restore that same public trust is long overdue. Our state has been through some very difficult times over the past several years. Scandals in all branches of government have damaged credibility in the eyes of the public. Unfortunately, this has undermined the public's confidence in our system, weakening our democracy. It is our duty as elected officials to restore that priceless public trust.

The Judicial Reforms found in S.B. # 605 would achieve that important goal. Specifically, this proposal would prevent the Judicial Branch from sealing certain court cases from the public, increase public access to court records and proceedings, increase public access to Judicial Branch meetings, and open Judicial Selection Commission and Judicial Review Council records and proceedings to the public.

As elected officials, we must take a positive step forward for Connecticut. Extending sensible transparency reforms to the Judicial Branch will further improve the public's confidence in our democracy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony and I offer my assistance as you debate this important issue.