



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

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

**Senate Bill 642, An Act Concerning The Availability Of Victim
Advocates In Courthouses**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch in regards to **Senate Bill 642, An Act Concerning the Availability of Victim Advocates in Courthouses**. This bill requires the Judicial Branch to place a victim advocate in each judicial district (JD) and geographical area (GA) courthouse.

As members of the Committee may be aware, victim advocates are Judicial Branch employees who provide assistance to crime victims. Presently, coverage is provided in all 13 JD's and 19 out of 20 GA's. However, since many advocates work in both a JD and a GA courthouse, this coverage is normally provided by only 25 individuals. At the current time, there are three vacancies that we are actively seeking to fill in the Stamford-Norwalk JD, and GA courts in Manchester and New Britain, thus only 22 individuals are currently at work in our criminal courthouses.

While the Judicial Branch supports the idea of having a dedicated victim advocate in each courthouse, passage of this bill would necessitate the hiring of several additional advocates. Therefore, the Judicial Branch respectfully requests that this bill be referred to the Appropriations Committee if it is favorably reported by this Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.