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To: Senate Co-Chair Andrew MacDonald
House Co-Chair Michael Lawlor
Senate Ranking Member John Kissel
House Ranking Member Arthur O'Neill
Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: James J. Lawlor
Probate Court Administrator

Re: RB 703, An Act Concerning Court Operations and Related Matters,
Protection Orders and Judgments of Paternity

Date: March 19, 2008

The Probate Court Administrator supports sections 27 through 36 of Bill 703, concerning paternity matters. These sections attempt to coordinate and bring consistency to the determination of paternity in the various forums in which such determinations are currently made. We make no comment concerning the other portions of the bill as they do not relate to probate matters.

Under existing law paternity issues may be addressed in the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters, the Family Relations Session of the Superior Court, the Family Support Magistrate Division and the Probate Courts. In addition, paternity may be established without judicial intervention by a duly executed acknowledgement of paternity.

This bill coordinates the efforts of the various tribunals empowered to make such determinations, as well as the acknowledgment of paternity. It determines the effect of a paternity determination and the recognition to be given it in all courts. It clarifies when a determination is precluded in a given forum by virtue of a prior determination in another. It specifies the mechanisms for opening an existing

determination of paternity. In addition, it brings these processes into line with existing case law.

We support the bill, which we believe will bring needed coordination to a multi-faceted system. It will provide clarity and direction to the courts as well, as to the parties, in the important area of paternity determinations.