



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION**

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**Testimony of Stephen N. Ment  
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing  
March 3, 2008**

**House Bill 5722, An Act Concerning Protective Orders And  
Court Services For Crime Victims**

Good afternoon. My name is Stephen Ment and I am here to testify on behalf of the Judicial Branch in regards to **House Bill 5722, *An Act Concerning Protective Orders and Court Services for Crime Victims***. This bill would provide for the issuance of a protective order with respect to certain sexual assault charges, and require the Chief Court Administrator to evaluate the need for court services and programs for crime victims.

With respect to section 1 which speaks to protective orders in certain sexual assault cases, the Judicial Branch respectfully notes that this section will have resource implications for court clerks' offices. Currently, orders issued pursuant to this section must be drafted by the clerk and often require research to properly complete, as the information necessary is not in the possession of the clerk. Since protective orders must be processed on their day of issuance, this research often takes clerks away from other necessary tasks.

As members of the Committee may be aware, the Judicial Branch's clerks' offices are acutely understaffed, with data entry backlogs increasing dramatically since priority must be given to processing orders of commitment to the Department of Correction (DOC), protective orders, and criminal arraignment data. To address the current predicament, the Judicial Branch has already requested funding and positions for additional staff. Should the Committee act favorably on this section of the bill, we

would respectfully request that the bill be referred to the Appropriations Committee for a review of its potential impact on the Judicial Branch.

Section 2 of the bill would require the Chief Court Administrator to ascertain the need for and implementation of programs to ensure the fair and respectful treatment of crime victims. This proposal would allow the Judicial Branch to complete a top-to-bottom assessment of how we are meeting the needs of crime victims, and we generally support its enactment. However, we again would respectfully point out that lines 87-89, which refer to the assignment of at least one victim advocate in each courthouse of our state would have resource implications, and ask that this language be stricken.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.