



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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**Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 19, 2008**

House Bill 5918, An Act Concerning Jurors

Good afternoon. My name is Stephen Ment and I am here to testify on behalf of the Judicial Branch in support of *House Bill 5918, An Act Concerning Jurors*. This bill, which is part of the Judicial Branch's legislative package, would add jurors excused from service because they have served within the past three years to the list of persons who are excluded from the summoning process and clarify that employers must allow their employees time off of work to serve as jurors, even if the employee works an evening shift.

Currently, jurors who serve one day of jury duty are entitled to be excused from jury service if summoned again within the next three years. While some opt to serve a second time, more than 60,000 individuals, annually, choose to be excused.

Re-summoning individuals who have already served within the previous three years contributes to the perception that the system is unfair and repeatedly targets certain individuals while avoiding others. Furthermore, summoning individuals who will ultimately be excused is a waste of resources. Under this proposal, individuals who have served one day of jury duty will automatically be exempted from serving during the next three years unless they specifically opt-in to the summoning process by completing a form before they leave the courthouse. The Judicial Branch believes that this statutory change will alleviate the inconvenience many individuals feel when repeatedly re-summoned for jury duty.

Sections 3 and 4 of the bill clarifies that an individual who has served 8 hours as a juror has worked a full day and cannot be compelled by an employer to work another shift.

Each year, Jury Administration receives numerous phone calls from jurors who have been mandated by their employer to work an evening shift after having served a full day as a juror. This fundamental unfairness can result in fatigue, reduced attention to evidence presented at trial, and potential safety hazards in the workplace. This issue extends beyond Connecticut; New York State and Massachusetts have each enacted legislation requiring employers to release night shift employees from having to work while serving as jurors. Citizens who respect the jury summoning process and serve in Connecticut are entitled to this same protection.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.