



CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY

TESTIMONY OF HON. DIANNE E. YAMIN, PRESIDENT JUDGE OF THE
CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

RE: S.B. 696 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE COURTS OF PROBATE

TESTIMONY:

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, Representative Fox, and Honorable Members
of the Judiciary Committee:

I am Judge Dianne Yamin, and I am the President Judge of the Connecticut Probate
Assembly. I have been the Probate Judge in the District of Danbury for eighteen years.
Today, I am speaking on behalf of the Connecticut Probate Assembly regarding Senate
Bill 696, An Act Concerning the Courts of Probate.

This bill concerns: (1) revising methods of calculating probate fees; (2) revising
provisions regarding retirement credits for judges and clerks whose probate districts have
merged with other probate districts; (3) providing that health insurance coverage for
probate judges and Probate Court employees be paid from funds appropriated by the
General Assembly, and (4) repealing certain provisions regarding probate appeals.

THE CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY SUPPORTS THIS BILL, AS IT
PUTS INTO EFFECT AN INTENDED BUT UNFULFILLED RESULT TO CREDIT
JUDGES AND CLERKS WHOSE COURTS HAVE MERGED WITH OTHERS, COST
EFFECTIVELY SHIFTS THE PAYMENT OF HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS
FROM THE PROBATE ADMINISTRATION FUND TO FUNDS APPROPRIATED
BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2009), AND ELIMINATES
OUT-OF-STATE PROPERTY FROM THE COMPUTATION OF PROBATE FEES.

Also, from a standpoint of equity, the inclusion of a mortgage deduction for purposes
of calculating the probate fee, as was the case before the CT Estate Tax was implemented
in 2005, is a positive step since only the remaining equity should be considered.

As you know, the Probate Courts have made great strides in recent years. At the
direction of the Legislation Program Review and Investigations Committee, and Judges
within the system, we have created minimum standards and hours for our Courts, have
greatly increased the volume and quality of education for Judges and Clerks, have
become more accessible to the public through our website (www.ctprobatejudges.org),
newsletters and in other ways, have created more rigorous regulations for the
administration of our Courts, have studied our salaries, have expanded our nationally
renowned Regional Children's Probate Courts, and have taken many other positive steps.

Along those lines, and in part as a result of some of these reforms, the Probate Administration Fund has been severely depleted due to increased indigency fees, escalating health insurance costs, and the past use of the Fund for the State's other (non-judicial/general fund) purposes. Placing the Judges and Probate Clerks into a larger, more cost effective health care insurance pool with State employees makes great sense, and as a Probate Assembly, we strongly and sincerely support this provision of the Bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne E. Yamin
President Judge
Connecticut Probate Assembly