



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

CHAMBERS OF
BARBARA M. QUINN, JUDGE
CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

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HARTFORD, CT 06106

Testimony of
Judge Barbara M. Quinn, Chief Court Administrator
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 19, 2008

**Senate Bill 697, An Act Concerning Judicial Department Personnel and the
Appointment of Family Support Magistrates**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch in regards to **Senate Bill 697, An Act Concerning Judicial Department Personnel and the Appointment of Family Support Magistrates**. I will confine my remarks to three of the subjects addressed by the bill.

Sections 1, 8, and 9 of the bill concern the Judicial Branch's temporary employees. As I stated in my testimony on **Senate Bill 633, An Act Concerning Temporary Employees of the Judicial Department**, addressing the issue of the Branch's temporary employees has been one of Chief Justice Rogers' top priorities since she took office nearly one year ago. We concur strongly with the notion that virtually all classes of temporary employees in the Judicial Branch are underpaid relative to their permanent counterparts. To address this issue, the Judicial Branch requested, as part of the budget process, the funds necessary to pay all temporary employees 80% of their full-time counterparts at an annual cost of about \$3.4 million. Unfortunately, to date the requested funding has not been provided to the Branch. We would appreciate any assistance that you can provide in securing the necessary funding to fairly compensate our temporary employees. For this reason, the Branch wholeheartedly endorses sections 8 and 9 of the bill. As for Section 1, I would like to detail why this section would have little practical effect.

The Judicial Branch has been allocated a number of positions that may be filled. In addition, the Branch is required to maintain a particular number of vacancies. Also, the money that can be used to pay employees is reduced to reflect the savings resulting in the delay in filling positions and the fact that often a long-term employee is replaced by a younger employee who will not earn as much. Finally, the Branch must operate within the budget that has been allocated. To meet these requirements, the Branch can hire a very limited number of individuals into Judicial Branch permanent positions and relies on existing employees to fill new vacancies. The result is that Judicial Branch temporary employees seeking permanent employment cannot apply for positions to be filled by transfer or promotion, although they may apply for vacancies that are posted to be filled by new appointment, transfer or promotion.

Therefore, Section 1 of this bill will likely have little practical effect on the number of temporary employees who are actually appointed to permanent positions unless the measure also appropriates a commensurate number of new positions, and the requisite funding to the Branch. And to make our present efforts more difficult, the Governor's FY 2009 Midterm Budget Adjustments actually propose to *reduce* by 65 the number of authorized full-time positions for the Judicial Branch, in addition to a 65-position reduction that was already imposed in the current fiscal year. These reductions further restrict our ability to move temporary employees into permanent positions. For this reason, we would urge the Committee to take no action on section 1.

Turning to **Section 2** of the bill, this would allow current and retired family support magistrates to have their prior state service credited to them for purposes of retirement compensation. Under current law, judges and other state employees are given credit for prior state service upon retirement. We believe that the failure to include family support magistrates with judges and other state employees was an oversight, and ask for your support of this section which corrects this lack of parity.

Finally, **sections 4-7** of this bill contain the recommendations of the Commission on Compensation of Judges and Elected Officials on the remuneration of judges,

referees and family support magistrates. The Commission has recommended that the Legislature adopt a new mechanism for determining the compensation of judges and elected officials – a mechanism that would link increases in their salaries to those granted to state managers.

My testimony on **Senate Bill 624, *An Act Concerning Increases in the Compensation of Judges, Family Support Magistrates and Referees***, which is also on today's agenda, goes into great detail as to why we support this new mechanism. In short, linking increases in compensation to the annual percentage – if any – that Executive Branch managers receive would provide financial security to our judges, and would ensure that they receive the same equitable pay arrangement as others in state government. In addition, it would allow the state to better plan its own budget. I thank you for considering this proposal and urge your support for it.

Thank you for your consideration.