



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

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**Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 26, 2009**

House Bill 6699, An Act Concerning Child Support Enforcement

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Judicial Branch on *House Bill 6699, An Act Concerning Child Support Enforcement*. The Judicial Branch has concerns with this proposal because it would not increase or enhance the tools currently available to collect child support.

As members of the Committee may be aware, in IV-D child support cases, the Judicial Branch's Support Enforcement Services (SES) unit is responsible for monitoring child support awards for compliance with financial, medical insurance, and child care orders, as well as initiating court-based enforcement actions such as income withholdings and contempt applications when appropriate.

Under existing law, SES has a wide variety of enforcement remedies at their disposal that apply to all obligors, including self-employed. Thus, the bill, while well-intended, would not result in an increase in child support collected. For example, statutory authority already exists to issue income withholding orders against an obligor's payer of income in all IV-D cases, including unemployment compensation, workers compensation, retirement funds, and lien proceeds of litigation (including judgments and settlements). Authority also exists to freeze and seize bank accounts and other assets owned by the obligor and held by financial institutions. Payment is made to the State Disbursement Unit, which handles all child support payment processing in the state.

Section 3 of the bill requires the Judicial Branch and the Department of Social Services (DSS) to study and recommend ways by which the collection of child support can be enhanced. We would respectfully submit that this type of study would be time-consuming and draw personnel away from their core functions at a time of declining resources. That it is not to say, however, that further discussion and communication would not be beneficial. We actively work with our child support partners, including DSS, to develop strategies to increase collections, and we would be pleased to work with the proponents of this bill to draft legislation that is more workable.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.