



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

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**Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 24, 2009**

**House Bill 6708, An Act Concerning Criminal Cases Of Persons Who
Have Returned From Service With The Armed Forces**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Judicial Branch in opposition to *House Bill 6708, An Act Concerning Criminal Cases of Persons who have Returned from Service with the Armed Forces*. This bill would compel the Branch to establish a separate docket to handle criminal matters of those who have returned from service with the armed forces.

The Judicial Branch has consistently opposed legislation that would require the creation of special courts or dockets because, although those courts or dockets might benefit the cases they handle, they take away from the resources available to handle all our other cases. This is particularly problematic during this time of fiscal crisis, when our resources are already being strained.

In this particular case, the bill is unnecessary. Our judges often take into account the fact that a defendant has served their country and may have unique issues that led the individual to commit a crime; veterans are routinely referred to treatment suggested in this bill from the existing criminal docket. Passage of this bill would further strain Judicial Branch resources without providing a significant additional benefit to veterans. Therefore, I would respectfully request that the Committee not act favorably on this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.