



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

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

**Senate Bill 127, An Act Concerning The Collection Of Child Activity  
Fees Pursuant To A Support Order**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, on behalf of the Judicial Branch, in opposition to *Senate Bill 127, An Act Concerning the Collection of Child Activity Fees Pursuant to a Support Order*. This bill would expand the definition of "support order" to include child athletic, extracurricular or other activity fees.

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.

This proposal creates a category of support that would be difficult, if not impossible, for SES to monitor and enforce. For example, extracurricular expenses and activity fees are fluid and highly changeable - fluctuating by season, often stopping and starting - and do not lend themselves to regular and periodic collection. Furthermore, the bill would be very labor intensive for SES; conflict between parties concerning any fluctuation in the fees is likely to increase the number of cases requiring court hearings.

It must also be noted that, in addition to potentially requiring more staff to implement, the bill could have another cost to the state. As drafted, the bill makes no distinction between IV-D and non-IV-D child support cases. As it is not clear that

collecting activity fees is a IV-D activity, staff time for this function may not be eligible for federal re-imbusement.

Therefore, before this provision is enacted, we would respectfully suggest that it be studied by the Child Support Guidelines Commission for a full examination of its potential benefits and detriments. The Guidelines Commission is going to re-convene soon, so they could do this in a timely manner.

In conclusion, I would respectfully request that the Committee take no action on this proposal.