



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

CHAMBERS OF
BARBARA M. QUINN, JUDGE
CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

231 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106

Testimony of
Judge Barbara M. Quinn, Chief Court Administrator
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 26, 2009

**Senate Bill 1157, An Act Concerning Funding for Legal Services
and Judicial Branch Technology**

The Judicial Branch supports Senate Bill 1157, *An Act Concerning Funding for Legal Services and Judicial Branch Technology*. By way of background, the Judicial Branch worked with the Committee to identify fee increases that would provide significant revenue, with the understanding that the revenue generated would be used to fund legal services organizations and Judicial Branch technology. These are the fee increases included in this proposal.

The economic downturn has contributed to a funding crisis for legal services organizations of unprecedented proportions. Access to justice in the courts is a critical component of our system of justice and many of our states citizens suffer significant deprivations when it cannot be provided. Chief Justice Chase Rogers has adopted as one of the five overarching goals of the Strategic Plan for the Judicial Branch securing access to the courts for all. We have been working closely with bar leaders to assist in the efforts to secure such funding. The proposed fee increases would provide such assistance and we ask you to consider them favorably.

The Judicial Branch also has significant needs in the area of information technology. In recent years, the Judicial Branch has received only limited

funding for our information technology (IT) systems. Yet, at the same time, more and more demands are being put on those systems. The public and other state agencies rely on the currency and accuracy of the information we take in, store and disseminate. The residents of our state assume that public information is available on the internet around the clock. Other state agencies rely on the information that is provided to them by the courts each day, particularly in the areas of criminal matters and protective and restraining orders. All this information must be maintained and kept current on a daily basis. This is particularly important during this time of fiscal crisis, as technology becomes even more critical during times of dwindling resources. This bill, by providing the Judicial Branch with a funding stream dedicated to maintaining our information technology systems, would greatly assist us both at the present time and in the future.

In conclusion, this bill would significantly benefit the residents of our state, both by providing funding for legal services organizations and by ensuring the currency and accuracy of the information that flows through and from our court system. I urge the Committee to act favorably on this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.