



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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**Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Planning and Development Committee
Public Hearing
March 2, 2009**

House Bill 6589, An Act Concerning Land Use Appeals

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch in opposition to House Bill 6589, *An Act Concerning Land Use Appeals*. This bill would require the Judicial Branch to establish a separate docket in each judicial district to exclusively hear land use matter cases and, in addition, to assign only judges with experience in this area to hear these cases.

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. More than 75,000 civil cases were pending on our docket at the close of the last fiscal year, and tens of thousands additional cases were pending on our criminal, family and juvenile dockets. The Chief Court Administrator must have maximum flexibility in order to move these cases as expeditiously as possible. This bill reduces that flexibility in two key ways: by creating a specialized docket for one particular type of case, and by restricting her ability to assign judges in a manner that best meets the needs of the entire judiciary.

As the economy continues to deteriorate, we can expect to see a rise in all types of court cases. Thus, the Chief Court Administrator will need to retain as much flexibility as possible to ensure that cases are being heard promptly, not less.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.