



**AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION
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Testimony before the Judiciary Committee

Monday, February 23rd, 2009

10 AM in Room 2C of the LOB

Good morning/afternoon, Chairpersons and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Glenn Cassis the Executive Director of the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) a non-partisan state agency. This Commission represents a voice for the African-American community and accomplishes its mission primarily through research, policy analysis, advocacy and outreach.

The African-American Affairs Commission has always had a strong interest in a judicial system that affords all citizens fair and just treatment under the law. Whenever there is an opportunity to bring strength to the judiciary in Connecticut the Commission will lend its voice. The selection of judges to the Superior Court is very important and must be done with thoughtfulness and fairness. The

nominees selected must have experience, temperament and strong knowledge of judicial proceedings.

Attorney Dawne Westbrook has been an active litigant in Connecticut. She has earned the respect of citizens and her colleagues for her endeavors in representing clients in civil rights, employment, police misconduct and education law matters. For the past two and a half years Attorney Westbrook has served as the lead counsel for the Statewide NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. I have been privileged to have served on working task groups and committees with her and have witnessed her ability to think clearly and fairly. Attorney Westbrook has also availed her expertise to aspiring youth interested in careers in law. She has presented to student in the Street Law program at Weaver High School (Hartford) and was a featured panelist at Wesleyan University during the institution's 50th Anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court Decision. She has demonstrated her ability to be approachable to diverse groups.

Attorney Dawne Westbrook will be an excellent nominee to appoint to the bench of the Superior Court. The African-American Affairs Commission urges the Judiciary Committee to add her to the Court. She will bring integrity, talent and a strong legal mind to the Court.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Glenn A. Cassis
Executive Director