



**GBBA**  
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Testimony of Edward F. Czepiga II, President-Elect  
Greater Bridgeport Bar Association

House Bill 5148, An Act Concerning Funding for the Judicial Branch  
Judiciary Committee  
February 26, 2010

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Senator MacDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee to comment in support of House Bill 5148, An Act Concerning Funding For The Judicial Branch. My name is Edward Czepiga and I am the President Elect of the Greater Bridgeport Bar Association (GBBA), an organization which has been in existence since 1880 and currently has over 650 members. I am here on behalf of the association to speak in support of this bill and in particular to request funding so that the law library in Bridgeport can remain open and staffed.

The members of GBBA have expressed strong and overwhelming concern about the impact the closure of the courthouse library in Bridgeport will have on its members, the judges, pro se litigants, attorneys and the public in general. There is no other law

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library in the community. Those who need its services will need to travel to New Haven or Stamford. This places an especially undue burden on those members of the general public who need access to legal publications and services such as case law, legal forms, treatises and the expert assistance provided by the law librarians. It must be remembered that often these members of the general public are in the court house dealing with such important personal issues as foreclosures on their homes, custody of their children, dissolution of their marriages, just to mention a few. I have been advised by the Chief Clerk in Bridgeport that approximately forty percent (40%) of pending cases in the Bridgeport Court involve self represented litigants.

Additionally, for members of the legal community, including the judiciary and attorneys, the law library and its staff are vitally important for the day to day cases that are tried in the court house. Issues that need research and immediate answers often require visits to the library.

Lastly, the librarians provide invaluable assistance to not only the general public, but also to the judges and attorneys who come in with questions about issues, treatises, and publications. These services can never be duplicated or replicated by any "on line" or subscription services.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment on House Bill 5148. On behalf of the Greater Bridgeport Bar Association, I urge this committee to act favorably on this bill.

Respectfully Submitted,

Edward F. Czepiga II  
President Elect  
Greater Bridgeport Bar Association