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Judiciary Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

Re: April 8 hearing on Raised Bill 6477

I regret that I will be unable to be present to testify on this bill on April 8, but I have been advised that I may submit written testimony which will be considered by the Committee.

I am an attorney, admitted to practice in the State of Connecticut since 1976, and I have practiced in the field of immigration law since 1978.

I applaud the intent of this bill, which is to prevent unqualified individuals from ruining people's lives by giving them erroneous advice. Over the years I have seen people's lives ruined by bad immigration advice from unqualified individuals.

However, I believe the law needs some tweaking to avoid unintended consequences.

First, I believe an exception should be clearly carved out for attorneys admitted in other jurisdictions and employed by businesses, where the attorney's legal work is for the benefit of the employer rather than for individual clients. I understand that under the present law such "corporate counsel" are not prosecuted for unauthorized practice of law. (I would not use the term "corporate counsel", in view of the fact that businesses now take many legal forms, of which the corporation is only one.)

Second, the bar on drafting and research should not apply to a person working under the supervision of an attorney, whether one admitted in Connecticut or admitted elsewhere. Paralegals have become essential to the practice of law, and a large part of their work involves drafting and research. The supervising attorney is responsible for the work of the paralegal.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth B. Leete