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Testimony by Representative Juan Candelaria
April 8, 2011

**House Bill 6477, AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW
BY NOTARIES PUBLIC AND THE OUTSOURCING OF THE DRAFTING, REVIEW OR
ANALYSIS OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS**

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, I am pleased to testify in support of HB 6477, An Act Requiring the Unauthorized Practice of Law by Notaries Public and the Outsourcing of the Drafting, Review or Analysis of Legal Documents.

This legislation is very important to a vast number of constituents I represent in my district who have been victims of unethical individuals who have used their offices to mislead and wrongfully advise on legal matters that notaries public are not authorized to do.

Many have been asked to pay deposit fees for legal counsel that they never receive, which brings further financial and legal difficulties. This is particularly common among the non-English population who are less knowledgeable of notary public duties and boundaries.

This legislation will allow clarification that notary publics are not attorneys and cannot provide legal assistance and would increase penalties to those who disregard it. This is a critical issue to the Latino community because in most of the Spanish speaking countries, a "*Notario Publico*" or Notary Public is a designation given only to attorneys, and many Latinos come to our state believing that it is the same in the United States.

Passage of this legislation would be a tremendous benefit in preventing future occurrences to those who might fall victims, especially those who are most vulnerable to language barriers and resources.

I urge the committee to support this legislation and to move it forward so that we may strengthen the existing statutes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Juan Candelaria