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Testimony of Stephen Nevas, Esq.  
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Senate Bill 1234, An Act Concerning Nondisclosure of Residential Addresses of Certain  
Public Officials and Employees  
Judiciary Committee  
April 8, 2011

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present the position of the CBA Real Property Law Section and the Media and the Law Committee with respect to Senate Bill 1234. The Real Property Law Section and Media and the Law Committee **oppose** Senate Bill 1234 urge the committee to **reject and not favorably report the bill**.

What concerns us at the outset is that there is no demonstrated need for the bill – that is, no nexus between an established risk and the protections proposed by the bill.

This bill is actually aimed at those who maintain the public records of every town and city in Connecticut. If enacted, it will cripple their ability to maintain usable records essential to every day life and commerce while imposing incalculable costs to redact records and later undo the redactions when someone is no longer on this list of public officials or employee – if ever there is an actual list to begin with.

The Real Property Law Section believes that this measure would make title searches impossible whenever any of the protected persons would be in the chain of title. If one can't successfully establish chain of title, title searches would become meaningless, affected real property couldn't be conveyed or mortgaged, and many mortgages would be difficult or impossible to be released on the land records. Assessor's records as well, without addresses, will be useless.

Among other things, the bill would require the redaction of addresses from dog licenses, rendering Animal Control Officers unable to find the animal or its owner. Zoning applications, voting lists, marriage licenses, even business licenses of those who also work at home would be impacted by the bill. One member of the Real Property Law Section estimates that the bill would apply to 100,000 or more people and the expunging of the public records would need to be bourn by taxpayers.

Those in the public eye who want to take extra protective measures have alternatives, such as placing property in trust or an LLC and, thus, their names would not be associated with a residential address. Moreover, there presently exists a half dozen provisions in the Penal Code in Chapter 982 to forbid and punish the harassment or intimidation of any public official, employee or citizen.

The Media and the Law Committee is particularly concerned about the effect of this proposal on the ability of groups dedicated to protecting the public interest, individual citizens, and the media, in its watchdog role, to monitor and hold accountable those who would use such a shield to engage in misfeasance or malfeasance.

If enacted, the bill would create unnecessary and perhaps unintended chaos. We urge you not to create a perceived entitlement to privacy on the basis of speculation where no clear and present danger is shown to exist. And, we ask you not to send the message that certain public officials and employees have a government-sanctioned right to conceal their presence and activities among us from public view.

For all the forgoing reasons, the Real Property Law Section and Media and the Law Committee of the Connecticut Bar Association urge the committee to **reject** the bill.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.