

**TESTIMONY OF ATTORNEY RICHARD A. BIEDER IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE
BILL 6605 – AN ACT REQUIRING ATTORNEYS TO MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL
LIABILITY INSURANCE**

March 21, 2011

Good morning Chairman Eric Coleman, Chairman Gerald Fox III, Ranking Member John Kissel, Ranking Member John Hetherington and other distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Richard A. Bieder and I am a partner at the firm of Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I have been practicing law in Connecticut for forty-five years. I am a former President of the National Board of Trial Advocacy. I am also a past President of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, a past Vice President of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and a past Treasurer of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association. I served as the State Chairman for the National Organization for Legal Problems in Education. I am also a member of the American Association for Justice and have been in charge of several committees, including chairing its: Education Department, National, State, Public Affairs Department, and International Practice Section.

While I do not speak for any organized bar association and only for myself, I believe it is only fair that if the legislature has seen fit to demand coverage from a whole host of others who deal with the public, lawyers should not be exempted.

The state requires private detectives, taxicabs, buses, and livery vehicle operators, amusement and entertainment providers, fireworks operators, physicians, dentist, chiropractors, optometrists, podiatrists, naturopaths, psychologists, dental hygienists, physician assistants and nurse practitioners to all carry malpractice

insurance. The state requires every owner of a motor vehicle, no matter his or her wealth, to carry insurance. The state mandates payment of bonds in all sorts of construction and economic situations. Yet lawyers, who are entrusted with clients' property as fiduciaries, are not required to carry any insurance at all or even tell their clients whether they have (and will maintain) liability insurance coverage.

Fortunately the incidence of legal malpractice is low. The Connecticut Judicial Department records of such cases show that (over the past 17 years) new filings for legal malpractice hover around the 100-125 mark per year. But when legal malpractice results in the client losing their case, or worse, never getting their case heard at all, the economic consequences are often significant.

Thank you very much for allowing me to testify today before your committee. I strongly urge all of the members on this committee to support House Bill 6605-An Act Requiring Attorneys To Maintain Professional Liability Insurance. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at 203-336-4421 and/or RBieder@koskoff.com.