



VivianLea Solek
Curatorial & Collections Management Consultant
580 Wheeler Road
Monroe, CT 06468
203-308-0279 cell
203-268-7940 home
vlsolek50@gmail.com

Testimony of VivianLea Solek

Concerning Raised Bill 5355, "AN ACT CONCERNING MUSEUM PROPERTY"

March 5, 2012

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee, my name is VivianLea Solek, and I am a Curatorial & Collections Management Consultant from Monroe. I am here to speak in **support of Raised Bill 5355**.

Bill 5355 is a critical piece of legislation that will support Connecticut's numerous museums, libraries and archives. This proposed legislation is in keeping with similar legislation that has been passed in 37 states, including most recently Massachusetts and Vermont in New England. Connecticut and Rhode Island are the only two states in New England which do not currently have this type of legislation.

This act will enable museums, libraries, archives, historical societies and other cultural institutions (hereafter called Museums) to resolve the problem of unclaimed and undocumented objects which result when lenders and donors do not claim items loaned to museums for an exhibit, for identification or evaluation, or when a donor simply leaves the property "on the doorstep." The past practice of "permanent loans," which current best practices strongly discourage, has resulted in numerous items being left in Museums for generations for which the rightful owners of the property can not be found. Much of the unclaimed and undocumented property currently in Museums has been held for decades before relationships between lenders, donors and Museums were formalized with written loan agreements, temporary deposit receipts and other documentation now in use.

Without legal title to unclaimed or undocumented objects, Museums can only make limited use of these items while bearing all the costs and burdens of providing secure climate-controlled storage, inventories, record keeping, and general overhead.

I have worked with several museums and historical societies in Connecticut that have old loans and abandoned property in their collection. HB 5355 will provide them the tools they need to address these orphaned collections.

I ask the Committee to please **SUPPORT HB 5355** as an important step in strengthening the cultural community in Connecticut as they pursue best practices that are critical to the care of our cultural patrimony.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "VivianLea Solek".

VivianLea Solek