

Diana Huntington, RDR, CRR
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February 29, 2012

Re: Governor's H.B. No. 5027 -- "An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget recommendations Concerning the Elimination, Consolidation and Modification of Various Boards and Commissions"

Dear Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Morin, and all Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Diana Huntington. I am a Court Reporter /Licensed Shorthand Reporter (# 100) working here in Connecticut since 1987 and I am a member of the Connecticut Court Reporters Association (CCRA). Through the CCRA it has come to my attention that Governor Malloy is proposing to eliminate the board that oversees our license.

Per the request of the CCRA, and of my own will, I am writing to you to **vehemently oppose the termination or elimination of the State Board of Examiners of Shorthand Reporters** established under Section 20-651 of the Connecticut General Statutes for the following reasons:

The Board of Examiners has a vital role in overseeing our profession in Connecticut under the present law. It holds hearings on complaints it receives from the public and other shorthand reporters. The Board's very existence not only acts as a deterrent for out-of-state, unlicensed court reporters taking jobs away from Connecticut-residing court reporters, but the fact that three of the Board members are actual reporters themselves ensures that awareness of any such issues are brought to light and remedied by our tight-knit, professional community.

In conjunction with the CCRA, the Board also oversees the procedure for the administration of the state licensure exam. It assures that our exam is comparable to other state exams and the exams of the National Court Reporters Association, thereby assuring that our exam is a reasonable assessment of the abilities of the candidate's reporting skills. In order to become licensed, a reporter must first undergo rigorous training, pass the all-day, four-part state or national exam, pay the licensing fee, and then must obtain, on an ongoing basis, thirty (30) hours of Continuing Education per cycle in order to maintain their license.

The Board and the CCRA work in unity to address any potential unethical conduct, or anything else, that stands to compromise the high standards of our profession. The Board and CCRA worked intimately over the years to finally implement penalty legislation that now provides the Board the power to impose, under said disciplinary provisions, significant financial penalties for acts of misconduct not only by individual reporters, but by any agency who may not need to be licensed but sends the unlicensed reporter here to Connecticut to cover work. In fact, the Board recently exercised that power in 2010 on a New York firm.

In this economy, many individuals are worried about job security and, like the State, financial stability. If unlicensed reporters come into Connecticut, they not only are stealing the work from the Connecticut-licensed reporters, but also may be "stealing from the state" in that they will be less inclined to pay the different fees and taxes, both sales tax and income tax, that are generated by our work product. The Board's very presence – but especially with the three reporter members' involvement – has the ability to thwart that type of activity, thereby sustaining a much-needed sense of job security and financial stability to the Connecticut-licensed freelance reporter.

Finally, with respect to the State's budgetary concerns, I believe that this Board is self-sustaining in that the licensure renewals alone, some \$50,000+ every three years, to the State more than pays for itself.

This is an all-volunteer board whose members may receive some very minor remuneration for mileage, perhaps around \$200 a year. This is a very small price to pay for all the benefits this Board affords to not only the profession it oversees, but as well to the consumer to which we provide a vital service.

Sincerely,

Diana Huntington, RDR, CRR, LSR #100

cc: Kate Shea, Committee Clerk@gaemail@cga.ct.gov