



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE JUAN CANDELARIA
NINETY FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

300 CAPITOL AVE STE 1804
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

CAPITOL: 860-240-8585
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267
FAX: 860-240-0206
E-MAIL: Juan.Candelaria@cga.ct.gov

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

VICE CHAIRMAN
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

March 15, 2012

To: Senator Coleman
Representative Fox
Members of the Judiciary Committee

Re: H.B. 5147: AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNATHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW BY NOTARIES PUBLIC

I write to support of H.B. 5147: AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNATHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW BY NOTARIES PUBLIC. I am distressed by how some notaries abuse their title to provide legal advice, often charging recent immigrants large sums of money for assistance with immigration matters.

The term "public notary," when translated directly into Spanish, indicates that someone has specialized training and qualifications to provide immigration assistance and other legal services. Recent immigrants, often with limited resources, local connections, English language abilities, and American cultural knowledge, are particularly susceptible to this misrepresentation. They need the enhanced protection H.B. 5147 provides.

Immigration has been a defining American national trait throughout our country's history. Recent immigrants, whether they are filing taxes or seeking to secure permanent residency, citizenship, or other immigration services, are beginning to take part in our local communities. Notaries who prey upon immigrants trying to navigate our legal system make the immigration process much more difficult and create significant social harm. Their misrepresentations and unlicensed legal services often lead to financial loss and sometimes jeopardize immigrants' legal standing.

The current misdemeanor penalties for abusing the position of notary public are insufficient to address these significant losses. H.B. 5147 makes it a felony for notaries to provide unlicensed immigration legal services and to advertise using certain misleading translations of the title "notary public". The enhanced penalties should help incentivize police to investigate these crimes, fairly punish offenders, and duly protect immigrants. I urge you to support this bill.

State Representative Juan Candelaria