

Standard Oil of Connecticut, Inc.

S.B. 5388 AN ACT CONCERNING COURT FEE AND DELIVERY OF LEGAL SERVICES
TO THE POOR

Judiciary Committee- Public Hearing
March 9, 2012

Testimony

Of

Jacqueline Ivel

Standard Oil of Connecticut, Inc.

299 Bishop Avenue

Bridgeport CT 06610

Tel. 800-822-3835 x 3595 Fax 203-337-3520

jivel@standardoil.net

Recommended Legislative Action: Oppose the passing of S.B. 5388

Thank you for the opportunity of speaking to you today.

My name is Jacqueline Ivel and I am the Collection Manager of Standard Oil of Connecticut, Inc. Standard Oil is located in Bridgeport, Conn and provides heating oil to customers throughout Fairfield and New Haven Counties.

I am here to speak in opposition to H.B. 5388 *An Act Concerning Court Fees and the Delivery of Legal Services to the Poor* for the following reason;

The bill's title, while on the surface sounds like a good idea, will have an ultimate impact and is detrimental to both businesses and consumers alike. Upon scratching the surface, businesses are affected by the initial cost of filing claims as well as the increasing cost to recover claims in order to recoup lost revenue. Once you dig a little deeper, it is apparent that the consumer is ultimately bearing the cost.

First; the very fact that the consumer is being sued depicts that the consumer is most likely already experiencing financial hardship. Most collection cases are initiated not because the defendant does not want to pay but because they cannot afford to pay.

Additionally, given the current economic conditions, many middle class people are suddenly finding they are underemployed or out of work with no foreseeable remedy in sight. These people are witnessing their middle class status shrinking right before their eyes. When they are being sued, all filing cost are always assessed to the defendant to repay, in essence this is the same defendant who is already experiencing a bout of financial hardship. While it is very understandable that there needs to be a way to fund legal services for these people, I don't believe the right way is to impose an additional fee during these tough economic times.

Second; an increase in filing fees will also immediately and adversely impact businesses. As fewer claims will be filed resulting in an immediate loss of revenue, as many businesses may find that they can longer afford to use the small claims courts turning many of their receivables into bad debts, which may result in those same businesses hesitant to extend credit, as they may feel they are unable to recoup their losses largely impart to the rising cost of trying to recover and the likelihood of ever recovering on the judgment, which will inevitably result in loss of jobs.

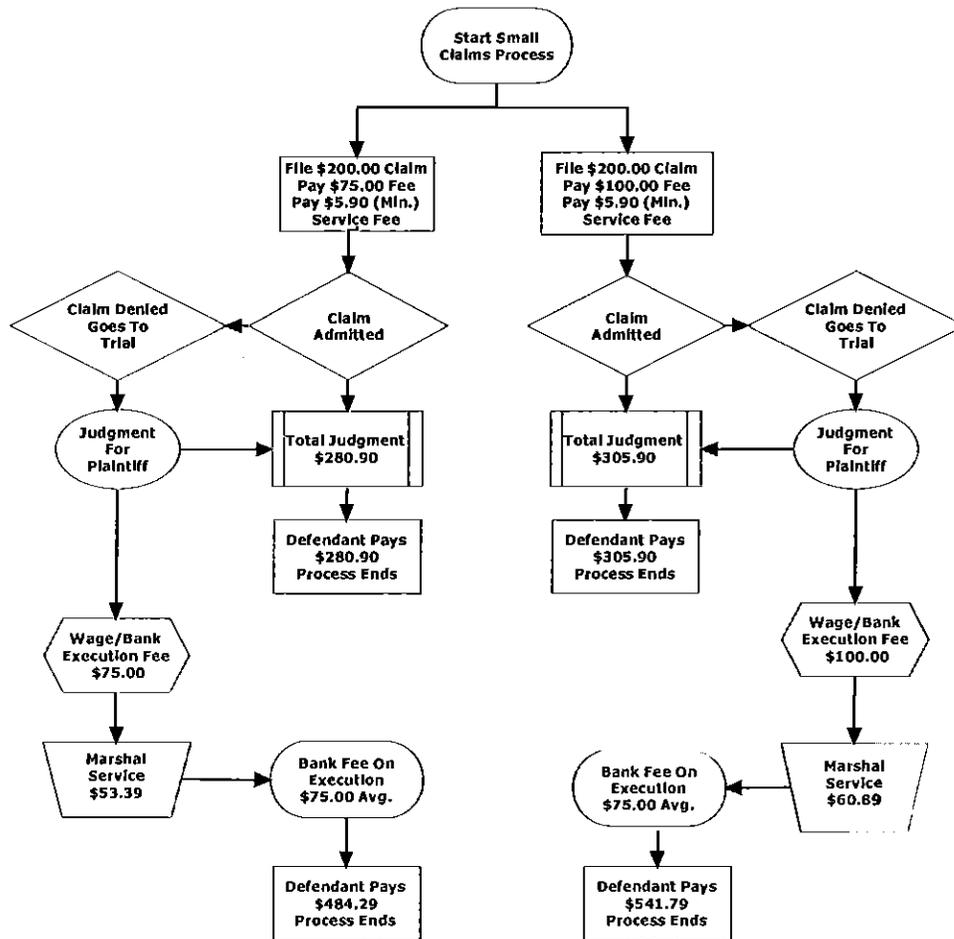
In a time where the financial equilibrium of our state is already teetering on the brink of disaster, can we the employers and we the consumers, afford another bill that in the end may lead us to buyer's remorse?

I have attached a flow chart which outlines the financial impact to consumers as a result of the passing of this bill.

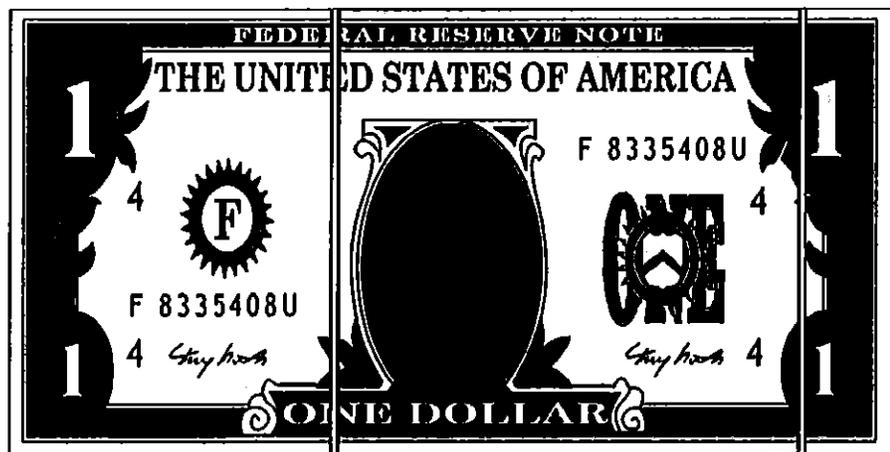
I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to address the panel today.

Jacqueline Ivel
Standard Oil of Connecticut, Inc.
299 Bishop Avenue
Bridgeport CT 06610
1-800-822-3838 x 3595

Justice Overpriced = Citizens Overburdened



\$200.00 In Damages Can Become \$541.79 With Court Costs And Other Fees - A 171% Increase - Can The Creditor Afford The Fees - Can The Debtor Ever Pay Them??



\$284 Current Costs & Fees 53: 53 (52%)
\$200 Damages: 37 (37%)

Proposed Fee Increases: 11 (11%)