



**CRAWFORD**  
George W. Crawford Black Bar Association



March 9, 2012

**VIA HAND DELIVERY**

Joint Committee on Judiciary  
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: In support of Senate Bill 31, "An Act  
Establishing a Commission on Judicial  
Compensation"

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Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

On behalf of Connecticut's four affinity bar associations, the Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association (CAPABA), the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association (CHBA), the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association (Crawford) and the South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut (SABAC), we jointly write in support of **Senate Bill 31, "An Act Establishing a Commission on Judicial Compensation."**

The bill establishes a 9 member commission comprised of individuals with experience in human resource management. The Commission will be charged with recommending the appropriate salary for Connecticut state judges. As you know, judges' salaries are set by statute, which means that a public act is required each and every time that an adjustment is made. We recognize that adjusting compensation levels, particularly of public officials, is not easy or popular, but it is necessary to ensure that our government operates effectively and encourage diverse candidates to aspire to join the bench, as well as retain the highly qualified and diverse judges within the state to remain on the bench.

Our organizations represent the interests of many of Connecticut's minority lawyers, judges<sup>1</sup>, legal professionals, and law students. We share a common interest in the goals of ensuring access to justice by the minority communities that we represent and believe that a highly qualified and diverse bench with a variety of experiences is fundamental to achieve this.

Last year, we surveyed CAPABA, CHBA, Crawford, and SABAC members to ascertain our members' interest in becoming a Connecticut Superior Court judge. For those who stated that they were not interested, we asked why so as to determine if there were any real or perceived barriers for our respective members to seek to join the bench. In doing so, "low pay" and "student loan debt" were two of the reasons provided. To attract qualified diverse candidates to the bench and continue to retain the

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that any and all judges who serve on our respective boards have recused themselves from voting on any decision as to whether to support this bill.

highly qualified diverse judges within Connecticut, we need a reliable method to fairly adjust compensation levels as economic conditions warrant. We believe that this Commission will do just that and ask that you support this bill as well.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter of support.

Sincerely yours,



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