

SNELLA

RE: S.B. 418

March 19, 2012

Senator Eric D. Coleman
Co-Chair, Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 2500
Hartford, CT 06106

Representative Gerald M. Fox
Co-Chair, Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 2502
Hartford, CT 06106

Senator John A. Kissel
Ranking Member, Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 3400
Hartford, CT 06106

Rep. John Hetherington
Ranking Member, Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 4200
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chairman Coleman, Chairman Kissel, Ranking Member Fox and Ranking Member Hetherington:

On behalf of the Southern New England Law Librarians Association (SNELLA), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 418, *An Act Adopting the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act and the Uniform Certificate of Title for Vessels Act*. SNELLA strongly urges the Committee to approve the *Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act* (UELMA), which will provide Connecticut with a technology-neutral, outcomes-based approach to insure that online state legal material deemed official will be preserved and made permanently available to the public in unaltered form.

I am the current president of SNELLA, a lecturer of legal research at the Yale Law School and a resident of Connecticut. SNELLA was founded in 1978 and is a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL). We are a non-profit organization of law library personnel largely from Connecticut, serving the information needs of the legal community and the public at academic, firm, state, and judicial law libraries across the state. In 2010, SNELLA surveyed the wealth of online legal information in Connecticut for AALL's National Inventory of Primary Legal Information and found that this state is not authenticating legal information; that the documents, while informative, are not evidence of the law. This survey confirmed an issue that AALL first drew attention to in its 2007 *State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources*: that state government-hosted websites, including Connecticut, are posting legal information without assuring authentication, preservation and permanent public access for these documents. This survey also highlighted a common question that I receive from students: how trustworthy are state-level primary legal resources on the web?

I thank the Connecticut General Assembly for being at the forefront of considering the authentication of legal information. Your Paperless Task Force began this discussion last year when it considered revising the electronic and print distribution of Connecticut bills to libraries.

I had the pleasure of consulting the Task Force during its investigation. We both agreed that, despite electronic distribution being convenient and cost-effective, the General Assembly needs to do more to ensure the authenticity of documents as it migrates towards more paperless operations.

The General Assembly also put this issue at the forefront with the adoption of Public Act 11-150, Sec. 28, which mandated that the State Librarian and other key officials establish standards for electronic authentication and preservation. I am very pleased that the Connecticut State Librarian's *Recommendations of the State Librarian for Establishing Standards and Guidelines for the Preservation and Authentication of Electronic Documents* includes a recommendation that "the State Librarian shall encourage the adoption of the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA) in Connecticut."

Therefore, I strongly urge you to support Raised Bill No. 418, *An Act Adopting the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act and the Uniform Certificate of Title for Vessels Act*. This Bill covers a range of key materials including the Constitution of the State of Connecticut; the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut; the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies; and the reported decisions of the Supreme Court, the Appellate Court and the Superior Court. It will ensure that anyone--whether a judge, legislator, lawyer, law student or member of the public--will be able to verify the trustworthiness of the state legal material available to them online.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Camilla M. Tubbs
President
Southern New England Law Librarians Association