



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(860) 757-2270 Fax (860) 757-2215

Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 23, 2012

House Bill 5510, An Act Providing Notice Of Pending Family Relations Matters to
Judges in Family Violence Cases

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Judicial Branch in opposition to House Bill 5510, *An Act Providing Notice of Pending Family Relations Matters to Judges in Family Violence Cases*. The bill would require court clerks to notify judges hearing criminal family violence cases of any pending civil family relations matters involving the same parties. Implementation of this bill would require changes to police and court procedures, as well as substantial additional resources.

Criminal court clerks do not have access to victim information, so will be unable to check to see if the parties are also involved in a family relations matter. Supplying the clerk with this information so that they would be able to confirm the existence of a family relations matter is neither easy nor advisable. Police procedure would need to be altered to require them to provide victim information to the clerk. More importantly, once victim information is received by the clerk, it would become part of the publicly available court file. This could potentially lead to unintentional, negative consequences for the victim's safety.

From an operational perspective, should the clerk be charged with conducting this research on every family violence case – and prior to the defendant's first appearance – it will further burden our already understaffed clerk's offices. Additional resources would be necessary to comply with this new mandate.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this bill