



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Human Services Committee Public Hearing
February 14, 2013

House Bill 6369, An Act Concerning Child Support And Enforcement

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch in regards to **House Bill 6369, An Act Concerning Child Support and Enforcement**. The Judicial Branch supports sections 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the bill.

Sections 1, 3, 4, and 5 provide for a new and simpler standard for the court to use when determining the reasonable cost of health care in court-ordered medical support cases by shifting to a single tier definition of "reasonable" (5% instead of a choice between 5% and 7.5%) and by changing the basis from net income to gross income.

Presently, employers are required to determine an employee's net income using the child support guidelines. This is difficult for employers because the guidelines are not easily accessible, nor are they easily understood. Using one's gross income would relieve employers from the complicated – and often erroneous – calculation of net income.

While the Judicial Branch takes no position on the actual percentage chosen, we do believe that utilization of a single percentage would better serve the court and parties. Currently, the 2-tier system provides orders that are built upon the income level of obligated parents at the time the order is entered by the court. If or when the parent's income changes, the order may no longer be appropriate; this necessitates a return to court for a modification. For example, if the parent's income changes for the

worse and the parent does not return to court – court intervention requires time and money – the parent will still be obligated to pay the higher percentage.

By contrast, a single percentage would not be affected by income fluctuations. Once determined by the court, the order remains, regardless of income; this achieves efficiency for the court and parties because the case would not have to return to court to re-establish the correct “reasonableness” percentage whenever the obligated parent’s income changes.

In closing, the Judicial Branch also supports section 6 of the bill that allows Judicial Marshals to execute capias arrest warrants based on a copy of the original capias order, similar to the authority already in statute for state marshals to do the same.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.