



30 Bank Street  
PO Box 350  
New Britain  
CT 06050-0350  
06051 for 30 Bank Street  
P: (860) 223-4400  
F: (860) 223-4488

Testimony of Houston Putnam Lowry  
Legislative Chair of the  
International Law & Practice Section of the Connecticut Bar Association  
*House Bill 5513, AAC The Unauthorized Practice of Law By Notaries Public*  
Judiciary Committee  
February 13, 2013

The Connecticut Bar Association's Section of International Law supports enactment of this bill because it will promote protect consumers.

In civil law systems, a "Notario" (or Notary) is a very senior attorney by training. They are lawyers specializing in non-contentious private civil law who draft, take, and record legal instruments for private parties, provide legal advice and are vested as public officers with the authentication power of the State regarding foreign transactions. Many contracts in civil law systems are not enforceable unless the contracts are registered with a notary (who can often charge a significant fee based upon the size of the contract). While the Archbishop of Canterbury continues to appoint notaries within the United Kingdom, this admittedly rare legal office does not exist within the common law parts of the United States.

The function of a notary public under Connecticut law is completely different. A notary public can only administer oaths, acknowledge signatures and certify copies. They are not lawyers by training.

Many recent immigrants, particularly from civil law countries, do not understand this distinction. They believe hiring a notary public is comparable to hiring a lawyer, especially regarding immigration matters. This is obviously note true and this bill will prevent a notary public from passing himself/herself off as a lawyer.

For these reasons, the Connecticut Bar Association's Section of International Law requests the Judiciary Committee favorably report this bill to the General Assembly.