

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, ladies and gentlemen of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Dr. Gil Lancaster and I am a cardiologist in practice for 25 years. I am currently the Director of Non-Invasive Cardiology at Bridgeport Hospital, an Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine at Yale University School of Medicine, the Connecticut Governor of the American College of Cardiology Board of Governors and the President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Cardiology (CCACC). The CCACC represents the doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals that take care of patients with any and all cardiovascular problems in the state- and I am here to speak in their behalf.

In 2005, the General Assembly passed Public Act 05-275, An Act Concerning Medical Malpractice, in an attempt to address concerns about the availability and affordability of medical liability insurance for physicians. The resulting statute strengthened what is known as a "good faith certificate" by requiring that the attorney filing suit attach a written opinion of an expert in the field. Among other stipulations, this legislation stated that this expert must be a "similar healthcare provider" to the defendant; that this expert had to provide a detailed basis for the formation of the opinion of medical negligence; and that the case would be dismissed if a plaintiff failed to obtain the required opinion prior to filing the suit.

Over the past 8 years, this legislation has been effective in reducing the filing of frivolous law suits, has helped doctors keep down costs of medical malpractice insurance to a somewhat more tolerable level and has been a national model of tort reform. In states that do not have this legislation, doctors have left many fields that are considered high risk for suits, such as obstetrics and anesthesiology, and this has significantly limited access to care for many patients.

Public Act 05-275 has not reduced the number of qualified law suits, and instead has increased the likelihood that "Certified" suits would get the required attention that they deserve. Raised Bill 6687 on the other hand, would significantly increase the number of meritless lawsuits to come to trial, flood the courts with frivolous law suits, unnecessarily tie up doctor's time, increase malpractice insurance rate and ultimately adversely affect patient access to medical care.

For the sake of patients, doctors and healthcare costs, I implore this committee to block any further progress of Raised Bill 6687.