



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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

Testimony of Stephen R. Grant,
Executive Director, Court Support Services Division

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
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S.B. 152, An Act Concerning Court Support Services

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebinbas and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Stephen Grant and I was recently appointed the Executive Director of the Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division (CSSD). It is a pleasure to appear before you today, on behalf of the Judicial Branch, to testify in support of **S.B. 152, AAC Court Support Services**. This bill is one of two that the Branch has submitted this year. It includes the language from S.B. 995, our proposal from 2013 that did not make it through the House of Representatives, as well as items that are new this session. The purpose of all of these proposed changes is to allow the Judicial Branch to function more effectively and efficiently, and to allow the Court Support Services Division to better serve our clients.

Briefly, the bill would accomplish the following:

Section 1 would allow the CSSD to screen the families we are working with for Department of Children and Families (DCF) involvement. If this proposal passes, the procedure will be for CSSD to inquire with DCF about family involvement. If DCF indicates that the family is involved with DCF, CSSD will obtain a release from the family to allow access to DCF records and information. Currently, initial information about whether CSSD clients are DCF involved is obtained through self-reporting. The ability to verify directly whether clients have active cases with DCF will result in a better understanding of the client's and the client's family needs, thereby facilitating the provision of appropriate supervision and services.

Section 2 amends the juvenile confidentiality statute to allow Probate Court judges and employees to access juvenile records, to the extent necessary to perform their official duties, and to allow the Take Into Custody orders to be disclosed to the necessary individuals. This second piece is a conforming change related to the proposed change in section 5, which I will describe shortly.

Section 3 would amend language that was enacted at our request in 2012 to make Alternative Sentencing Plans confidential, in order to allow the State's Attorneys and Department of Correction access to alternative sentencing plans and community release plans. Precluding access to those entities was an oversight; the State's Attorneys and Department of Correction employees need access to this information in order to perform their duties.

Section 4 would specifically authorize the Judicial Branch to access the Connecticut On-Line Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing (COLLECT) system in order to evaluate the suitability of applicants for sensitive Judicial Branch and contractor positions that include access to secure Judicial Branch information systems. Because they will have access to confidential information, the Judicial Branch needs to be able to screen certain categories of potential employees, and contractors' potential employees, for pending and non-disclosable cases.

Section 5 would enable law enforcement officers to locate and execute Take Into Custody orders through the PRAWN (Paperless Re-arrest Warrant Network), a secure computer system maintained by the Judicial Branch. Currently, this is a paper process. Converting it to an electronic system will allow for more accuracy and efficiency in the service of these orders, and will help prevent the unauthorized detention of children and the misuse of sensitive information included on the paper copies.

Section 6 would add restraining orders that are entered as a condition of probation to the criminal violation of protective order statute (C.G.S. § 53a-223), thus allowing violations to be prosecuted under that statute. Currently, when a Judge orders a protective order as a condition of probation, a probationer who violates that order cannot be arrested for criminal violation of a protective order. This proposed change will address this gap.

Sections 7 and 8 would amend the language enacted in 2013 that merged the pretrial drug education and community service programs in order to provide a treatment option for persons who are using that program for the first time, and to make technical changes. I would like to respectfully request a further technical change to this language, as follows:

On line 429, after "fifteen sessions" insert ", as ordered by the court based on the evaluation and determination required under subsection (c) of this section."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.