



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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MEMBER
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Testimony

In Support of Raised S.B. No. 494

An Act Concerning Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for Minor Children in Family Relations
Matters

Judiciary Committee

March 31, 2014

Dear Chair Coleman, Chair Fox, Vice-Chair Doyle, Vice-Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Kissel, Ranking Member Rebimbas, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The primary role of legislators is to represent the people who put their trust in them, and when it comes to children, accountability to this role and trust becomes even greater. I am submitting testimony in support of raised bill S.B. 494 to give a voice to the children on matters of family relations and the importance of establishing procedures to effectuate the hearing of a motion seeking removal of counsel for a minor child or removal of a guardian ad litem for a minor child.

A family member of a minor child, and the child herself, came to me with a complaint concerning a court assigned guardian ad litem. They had expressed extreme frustration in the myriad roadblocks they encountered in their request for removal of the child's guardian ad litem. I share this case in my testimony not only because of the silence by the courts, but because of the child's special educational needs her disability requires be met by law and sadly remain unserved

while family relations matters are negotiated. Raised bill S.B. 494 is a step in a positive direction of giving a voice to children, a step allowing a process of mediation in situations such as this.

I also support the bill's provisions for the selection of counsel or a guardian ad litem by the parties to family relations matters and the development of a publication on the general statutes about the roles and responsibilities of counsels and guardians ad litem appointed by the courts. Parties to family relations matters should be allowed to choose who they agree to would best meet the needs of their children and be given clear and precise information on their rights and more importantly, on the rights of minor children regarding court appointees who are charged to fill the position of counsel or guardian ad litem.

As legislators, we swear to serve the people who elect us. Moreover, we are accountable to the people whose voices are not directly represented in the voting booth, the children. The lives of children are held in a balance during proceedings on family relations matters, and these same children are putting their trust in us to do what is right to protect their welfare, which oftentimes is insensitively weighed by those given the responsibility to decide their future. I urge the Judiciary Committee to do what is right, please pass raised bill S.B. 494 and begin moving in a sure direction of giving a voice to children on matters of family relations.

Sincerely,



Michael L. Molgano

State Representative
District 144