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CRYSTELLE M. HIBBARD

March 9, 2015

State Representative Bob Godfrey
House Democrats Office
L.O.B. Room 4107
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: HB05505 JUD

Dear State Representative Godfrey:

Passage of the above-named bill to reform family court proceedings is a means to further devastate families already facing upheaval as well as to undermine the effectiveness of those attorneys and guardians ad litem who have been court appointed to help them. This bill places children at risk, parents at additional financial hardship, and the court at the untethered mercy of litigants already firmly entrenched in battle. Family law should never escalate conflict; however, this bill encourages it by its premise.

Guardians ad litem and attorneys for minor children work to help families in distress, not to destroy them. Should this bill become law, these experienced and trained professionals will no longer serve or offer needed assistance to the court. Potential defense costs of a frivolous civil action are enough of a deterrent to convince even the most proficient guardian ad litem or attorney for minor child to decline appointment by the court.

That the bill would require a health care professional in lieu of a guardian ad litem to appear in court also fails to consider the involved costs, both financial and in time. Family matters are not contingency fee based. If payment of a guardian's ad litem fees are already a problem, who is to compensate the health care professional and how much should he/she be paid? Surely medical insurance won't cover the fees. Furthermore, doctors and other health care professionals are not primarily in the business of testifying in court.

This bill must be defeated in totality. To do otherwise will significantly harm our family court and all those it is meant to help.

Very truly yours,



Crystelle M. Hibbard