

Testimony in Support of the Reappointment of The Honorable Chase T. Rogers as Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court by:

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Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the reappointment of The Honorable Chase T. Rogers as Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court. From our perspectives as deans of Connecticut's three law schools, we believe that Chase Rogers has provided extraordinary leadership and service in her role as Chief Justice, and we strongly support her reappointment, for several key reasons.

First, starting early in her tenure as Chief Justice, Chief Justice Rogers has worked tirelessly to improve the transparency of Connecticut's state courts and their responsiveness to the members of our communities. A key example of her effectiveness in this regard can be found in the strategic plan generated early in Chief Justice Rogers's tenure by the Public Service and Trust Commission that she conceived and formed. Working with remarkable efficiency, the Commission quickly produced a comprehensive strategic plan to help the judicial branch improve its services, accessibility, and accountability. That plan has guided much of the branch's work in the years that followed its completion, and all of us have benefited from the careful and thoughtful examination the Commission undertook to see how the judicial branch could function most effectively and enhance the public trust in its service.

Second, the Chief Justice has also served as one of our most articulate and compelling spokespersons and leaders in trying to ensure meaningful access to justice to all of our citizens. A key example is her leadership in conceiving and sponsoring the Pro Bono Summits, forums that have galvanized the bar to increase pro bono work and facilitated lawyers' ability to do so. The summits also gave rise to innovations like the pro bono portal now included on the CtLawHelp website, itself an example of Connecticut's national leadership in new approaches for addressing the crisis in access to justice for indigent citizens. A second example demonstrating the Chief Justice's concern for access to justice is her important leadership in helping secure additional sources of funding – including court fees – to help address the catastrophic loss of funding for legal services that occurred in 2008 and the years that followed, when changing market conditions decimated the IOLTA legal services funding mechanism. Third, Chief Justice Rogers has worked with the law schools of our state to recruit new lawyers to help parties in Connecticut's family courts, especially those who appear pro se. Chief Justice Rogers clearly understands and cares deeply about the challenges facing litigants who cannot -- or choose not to -- retain counsel to represent them, especially in family matters. She has championed the cause of making the courts supportive of self-represented parties, initiating service centers, pro bono assistance for pro se parties, and simplified court forms.

Third, in both her careful approach as a jurist and in her tireless and extraordinarily effective leadership of the judicial branch, Chief Justice Rogers has served as a wonderful example of professionalism and public service for new and aspiring lawyers in our state. We were extremely

honored when Chief Justice Rogers delivered the commencement address to Quinnipiac Law School's graduating class in May 2010 and has given talks at UConn Law School and Yale Law School as well. On those occasions and on many others, Chief Justice Rogers has been a remarkable and inspiring voice and role model of public service, and we are very grateful for the example she offers for the newest members of our profession.

Finally, Chief Justice Rogers has helped reinforce the core values of our judiciary and our state. Through her example and leadership she has worked to establish the highest standards of ethics and professionalism among our judges and court personnel. She has an acute appreciation of the nuances of checks and balances among the branches of our government, and thoughtfully executes the obligations of the Judicial Branch in maintaining those relationships. And she represents the judiciary and our state government well to all parts of our society, from large employers to the most vulnerable among us.

For all of these reasons, we strongly support Chief Justice Rogers's reappointment as Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court.