

Written Testimony of Hon. Jonathan Lippman
Chief Judge of the State of New York, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals
In Support of the Nomination of Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers
April 10, 2015
Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
State Capitol, Hartford, Connecticut

I submit this written testimony in support of the reappointment of Chase T. Rogers as Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court. It is an honor to have the opportunity to address this Committee. As the Chief Judge of New York State since 2009, I know Chief Justice Rogers well. We have worked together as the heads of our respective states' judicial branches, through the Conference of Chief Justices, and through our service on the Board of Directors of the State Justice Institute. She is truly someone who stands out among her peers. A superb head of the Supreme Court and the judiciary in Connecticut, she has confronted challenges to her court system with energy, creativity, judgment, and intellect. Chief Justice Rogers is a leader not only in Connecticut but around the country. She is recognized by her colleagues in other states as a model for chief justices and a highly effective reformer in promoting access to justice.

Chief Justice Rogers has a deep commitment to public service and a vision for a court system that is accessible, efficient, open, and fair. She has been tireless in solving problems and promoting change. As Chief Justice, she created the Public Service and Trust Commission to find out what the public wanted from their court system, established a Pro Bono Committee to increase volunteer service by the bar, formed the standing Access to Justice Commission, with a mission to develop recommendations to help ensure equal access to justice, and implemented reform after reform with an eye to better serving all who visit the courts. She has championed judicial independence, jury reform, alternative dispute resolution and mediation, increased use of technology to streamline

litigation and to support pro se litigants, changes to procedures in foreclosure cases, e-filing, and improvements to the complex litigation docket. It was Chief Justice Rogers' vision that also led to the creation of LawyerCorps Connecticut, a program that funds recent law school graduates to provide legal aid to the poor – a program that I so greatly admire and that is widely regarded as one of the breakthrough access to justice innovations in the country.

The reforms that Chief Justice Rogers has introduced are especially critical given the challenges that face Connecticut, New York, and so many states around the country in ensuring a level playing field for all who come through the doors of our courthouses seeking justice. In difficult economic times, the number of unrepresented litigants in the courts, especially in family and housing cases, requires that each and every litigant be treated with dignity and respect and get his or her day in court. Those unable to afford a lawyer struggle to navigate a complicated legal system. And I know firsthand the deep commitment that Chief Justice Rogers has to a court system that fosters equal justice for all, rich and poor, high and low alike. She understands that in this context, where equal justice is threatened, leaders of our judiciaries cannot take a business-as-usual attitude and rather must embrace change.

As much as she has done in Connecticut, Chief Justice Rogers has shared her talents on the national stage with her colleagues on the Conference of Chief Justices; as an appointee of the President of the United States to the Board of Directors of the State Justice Institute, fostering innovation in state courts around the country; as the appointee of Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts to the Committee on Federal-State Jurisdiction of the Judicial Conference of the United States; and so much more.

She has done all this while presiding in the Supreme Court and adjudicating cases with her characteristic intelligence, thoughtfulness, good judgment, and consideration for litigants, lawyers, and her colleagues alike.

Chief Justice Rogers' confirmation in 2007 was met with great enthusiasm from elected officials and fellow judges, who described her as extraordinary, remarkable, warm, decent, pragmatic, possessing integrity and character, and handling herself with poise, thoughtfulness, and a keen knowledge of the law. I concur in each of those descriptions of Chief Justice Rogers.

Chief Justice Chase Rogers has written the script for judicial competence, court leadership, innovation, and a commitment to the pursuit of justice in Connecticut and state courts around the country. She invariably looks to new solutions for the many challenges facing the courts. Her resourceful and skilled leadership of Connecticut's courts has brought great credit to your state. She is an exceptional Chief Justice, and I sincerely hope that she will have the opportunity to continue to serve the people of Connecticut in that role.