

**Testimony of Genea O. Bell, Esq. submitted to the Executive and Legislative
Nominations Committee
February 23, 2016**

Good afternoon Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Genea Bell. It is a great honor to be appointed to the Judicial Review Council by Governor Malloy. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to speak about my desire to serve on the Judicial Review Council.

I came to Connecticut in 2003 by way of Columbia, South Carolina, where I was born and raised. I left South Carolina when I was 18 to attend The Juilliard School as a classical violist and later became an elementary school teacher in Brooklyn, NY. After graduating from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 2007, I made law my third career. I am currently the Chief Legal and Human Resources Officer at Community Health Services, Inc. on Albany Avenue here in Hartford. In addition, I am the President of the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association and a Trustee of The Hartt School at the University of Hartford. I am also lucky to be the mother of three fabulous children: Marley, 10, who came halfway into my second year of law school; Toliver, 8 and Ebba, 6 – and wife to my wonderful husband, Todd, who is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Connecticut.

Prior to assuming my role at Community Health Services, I was in private practice in two large law firms primarily as a litigator. Having appeared before numerous judges, I understand the dynamics of the courtroom, including both the written procedures – when and where to file a motion, who argues first, the rules of evidence – and the unwritten curriculum – at which table does the plaintiff sit, what happens if a party is not present when the clerk calls the short calendar cases, and which person is the court reporter.

The sense memory of intimidation and fear that I experienced as a new lawyer standing before the bench can be recalled as immediately as any etude, concerto or sonata I have learned. And I understand that, for non-lawyers, for those coming to our Courts and administrative agencies in search of fairness and equity, this feeling may be amplified by the disquiet of personal misfortune made public. I would be honored to serve on the Judicial Review Council to help ensure that our courts and administrative agencies are committed not only to carrying out the technical letter of the law but to doing so with the highest standards of professionalism, compassion and respect for those that appear those who appear before them regardless of race, gender, religion, or economic circumstance. I would uphold these same values as a member of the Judicial Review Council.

In closing, I want to thank the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee for your time and consideration and for the opportunity to appear before you today.