

Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
Testimony of Mark Leighton
For Judicial Review Council
February 23, 2016

Good day Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Mark Leighton and it is an honor and privilege to be appointed as an alternate attorney member for the Judicial Review Council by Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

I want to thank this committee for the opportunity to appear before you to speak to my desire to serve on the Judicial Review Council.

By way of background, I currently reside in Vernon, Connecticut, where I have practiced law for over 25 years. Prior to living in Vernon, I lived in Ellington for over 25 years where my wife, Francine and I raised our two children, Melissa and David. I served on the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen in Ellington for a combined total of 12 years. I have served in other capacities as well, including the Democratic Town Committee, serving as vice chair for about eight years and as chair for five.

I initially started practice in a general practice firm in Ellington, and now have a firm in Vernon with 5 attorneys. I have handled virtually every area of the law. This included family law, general litigation, criminal law and personal injury. I dealt with judges in multiple courthouses in multiple areas of the law. In doing that, I believe I have gleaned a sense of what judges face day in and day out. In representing clients, including pro bono clients, I also have a sense of what those persons who come before judges face and the issues they may run across in dealing the court system. My interaction with judges and the courts, and my interaction with litigants and participants of the judicial system gives me an excellent foundation to serve on a council that reviews the complaints against judges and has a sensitivity to the complainants. More recently, as a workers' compensation specialist, I have obtained a unique insight that others on the Council may not have when dealing with any complaints against a Workers' Compensation Commissioner.

My interest in serving on the Council is simple. I believe that every participant in the court system should have open and full access to an impartial, unbiased and fair forum. They are deserving of being treated fairly no matter their financial or social background, creed or color. Likewise, those serving as judges or commissioners need to have complaints against them reviewed fairly and impartially with an understanding of not only the judicial system, but what those who come before them should be entitled to.

I believe that I bring to the Council the qualities necessary to assist the complainants and respondents to reach a fair resolution and determination.

I again want to thank this committee for allowing me to address you. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.