



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

*Written Testimony Presented before the
Government Administration and Elections Committee*

In Support of H.B. No. 5389
(An Act Concerning Public Financing for Judge of Probate Candidates)

February 29, 2016

Statement of Michael J. Brandi, Executive Director & General Counsel
State Elections Enforcement Commission

Chairman Cassano and Chairman Jutila, Vice Chairs Gerratana and Alexander, Ranking Members Senator McLachlan and Representative Smith, and distinguished Committee members. I am Michael Brandi, the Executive Director & General Counsel of the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

I am here to speak in favor of House Bill 5389. Under current law, candidates for Judge of Probate raise funds primarily from individuals, including individual attorneys who practice before them. This risks the appearance of bias to the public, when campaign contributors and those who solicit funds on behalf of the Judge's campaign appear before the Judge.

This bill authorizes SEEC to conduct a study of past Judge of Probate campaigns and to make recommendations based upon the study. We would look at recent election cycles for Judge of Probate candidates and study the source of contributions, as well as the amounts of expenditures, and then submit a report to the legislature, as well as any proposed legislation, if applicable, to extend the State's voluntary public financing program to include Judge of Probate candidates.

Thank you for this opportunity to present this testimony.