



Connecticut's Legislative
Commission on Aging

A Nonpartisan Public Policy and Research Office of the Connecticut General Assembly

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Testimony of Julia Evans Starr
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Judiciary Committee

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*With 21 volunteer
board members from
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Senator Coleman , Representative Tong and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Julia Evans Starr and I am the Executive Director of Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging. As you know, Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging is the non-partisan, public policy and research office of the General Assembly, devoted to preparing Connecticut for a significantly changed demographic and enhancing the lives of the present and future generations of older adults.

HB 5608: An Act Concerning a Grandparent's Right of Visitation with a Grandchild
~ Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging Informs

Special Act 11-12 established a Task Force to Study Grandparents' Visitation Rights. The Legislative Commission on Aging was charged with staffing the task force. The Task Force, comprised of attorneys representing parents and grandparents, a family court judge, legislators and grandparents, went through an deliberate process in the Fall of 2011 to identify statutory changes to the third party visitation statute 46b-59 while satisfying constitutional standards. The Task Force report can be found on the Commission's website (www.cga.ct.gov/coa) and may help to inform your work.

Throughout the course of the Task Force's work, which analyzed various amendments to Connecticut's third party visitation statute, it was clear that it needed to be consistent with a Connecticut Supreme Court ruling. This ruling allows for only a very narrow exception for visits by a third party (such as a grandparent) over a fit parent's objection (Roth v West, 259 Conn. 202 (2002)). Accordingly, the recommendation of the Task Force which became law the following year (PA 12-137) reflects a slight reach in the authority for third parties and yet is consistent with the Connecticut Supreme Court ruling. We're simply sharing the body of the Task Force work with you to help inform your deliberations. Thank you.