

55 Wolcott Woods Drive

Simsbury CT 06070-1428

February 19, 2016

Dear Governor Malloy,

I am deeply concerned that H.B. 5044 needs to restore state funding for probate courts instead of eliminating of unique and essential services such as:

- Appoint and oversee guardians for citizens who are intellectually disabled and therefore at high risk of financial and physical exploitation.
- Appoint and oversee conservators for citizens with Alzheimer's disease, mental illness, traumatic brain injury, etc. to assist them in handling their finances, making medical decisions, etc.
- Releasing estate tax liens so that surviving spouses can sell their property
- Adding grandparents as guardians of children whose parents seek treatment for mental illness and addiction issues
- Protecting children by assisting families when parents are unable to care for their children by pulling together all the resources combined in the children's courts

The probate courts voluntarily downsized in 2011 and eliminated the jobs and salaries of more than 60 judges. With computer upgrades and other inefficiencies we are able to return \$4MM to the general fund annually. Court staff has seen no significant wage increases since before the consolidation.

Your decision regarding HB6824 will most affect those from whom you probably hear the least: citizens who are children, conserved, mentally ill, and intellectually disabled. Please amend H.B. 5044 to restore and increase funding for the courts.

Sincerely,

Pamela C. Griffin