



March 27, 2017

Judiciary Committee  
300 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

***Testimony of Chris VanDeHoef in FAVOR of SB 981 An Act Concerning Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation and a Special Motion to Dismiss***

Co-Chairs Doyle, Kissel and Tong, Ranking Member Rebimbas, my name is Chris VanDeHoef and I am the Executive Director of the CT Daily Newspapers Association (CDNA) which is a trade association comprised of the 17 daily newspapers in Connecticut.

**Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today in SUPPORT of SB 981 An Act Concerning Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation and a Special Motion to Dismiss.**

SB 981 is an important measure to provide protections for citizens of Connecticut who wish to voice their opinion, publicly, without the threat of intimidation, real or perceived, of costly, baseless and intrusive lawsuits. It is unfortunate that in today's U.S. society we are seeing an increase in these types of lawsuits that don't seek any specific justified goal; but rather seek to mute opposing viewpoints and voices contrary to those with commanding resources. This type of intimidation, Strategic Lawsuit(s) Against Public Participation (SLAPP), is of growing concern across the country.

In Connecticut, media defendants have had lawsuits brought toward them in an effort to prohibit, or at the very least, make difficult, reporting on specific outcomes of protests, legal cases, legislative action or general news gathering. This type of anti-First Amendment action should be carefully reviewed as a serious concern and considered strongly when passing Anti-SLAPP legislation like SB 981.

CDNA hopes Connecticut joins the nearly 30 states and Washington DC who have passed similar versions of Anti-SLAPP legislation and are happy to join our colleagues with the Connecticut Broadcasters Association, ACLU, CCFOI, the

Connecticut Society for Professional Journalism, the Yankee Institute and the Connecticut Business and Industry Association in support of SB 981.

Sincerely,

Chris VanDeHoef  
Executive Director