SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): [Audio begins here] -- and new potential chairs and all sorts of cool things. Happy New Year to everyone. Happy Holidays. They go by too fast. I would now like to defer to the future House chair, Representative Stafstrom, to read the emergency instructions.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the interest of safety, I'd ask that you note the location of and access to the exits to the hearing room. The two doors through which you entered the room are the emergency exits and are marked with exit signs. In the event of an emergency, please walk quickly to the nearest exit. After exiting the room, proceed to the main stairs or follow the exit signs to one of the fire stairs. Please quickly exit the building and follow any instructions from the Capitol Police. Do not delay and do not return unless and until you are advised it is safe to do so. In the event of a lockdown announcement, please
remain in the hearing room and stay away from the exit doors until an all-clear announcement is heard.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you very much, Representative Stafstrom. Chairman Tong, attorney general-elect.

REP. TONG (147TH): I think he's ready. What do you think?

UNKNOWN: I think he's ready. [Laughing]

REP. TONG (147TH): He's always been ready. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to note some absences first. Representative Carpino is unable to attend because of legislative business. Representative O'Dea is in district on legislative business. Representative McGorty is out because of a family matter. Representative Riley is also out because of a family matter, but Representative Riley wanted to say to the nominees, particularly nominee Fatone, how much he regrets that he could not be here today, and wanted to be here, and would have cast his vote in the affirmative. And let me just say congratulations to the chairman-in-waiting, the incoming House chair of the Judiciary Committee. It is a well-earned honor, and I know that the Judiciary Committee will -- at least on the House side -- will be in very good hands, but I'll leave the -- I'll leave the Senate to the senators, although I do wanna congratulate [laughing] my very good friend, Senator -- Senator Winfield. And also, I wanted to say again, what a pleasure it has been to work with the Ranking Member, Representative Rebimbas, who I'm sure will have an important role in this committee and the Legislature. I don't know if the House Republicans have announced their
leadership team. They did? ["She is" in background] You're returning. Okay, good. Congratulations. [Laughing/crosstalk]

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Very good, and --

REP. TONG (147TH): [Laughing] I am not ready for Wednesday.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Okay, and I would point out, as much as Representative Stafstrom is ready, I think Representative Rebimbas is ready-in-waiting. So, if the House ever -- the House R's ever become the majority, I would hope that she would become chair of this committee as well. And congratulations, Senator Winfield. You and I have had a very good relationship over the years. I'm really very much looking forward to working with you in your leadership of this committee. It's fun and exciting and a huge amount of work, as I'm sure you're well aware, and hopefully you don't have 17 other committees at the same time like you did the last two years (not this time). Okay, anybody with any other announcements? Oh, I'd like to congratulate Representative Rebimbas on the birth of her second daughter as well. Congratulations. [Clapping] Okay, movin' right along. Okay, any other remarks by the Chairs? Okay. Nominations for review: 1. Toni M. Fatone of West Hartford to be a Workers' Compensation Commissioner. Do I have a motion? Oh no, that's for the meeting -- this is for the hearing, sorry. Ms. Fatone. [Crosstalk] Okay, could you raise your right hand? All right. Okay. Do you swear or affirm, as the case may be, that the information you will provide to this committee will be the truth, the whole truth, and
nothing but the truth, so help you God or under penalty of perjury?

TONI FATONE: I do.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you very much. You're encouraged to read a brief opening statement or talk off the top of your head -- either way.

TONI FATONE: Good morning, Senator Doyle, Representative Tong, Senator Kissel, and Representative Rebimbas, and the distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Toni Marie Fatone of West Hartford. It is an honor and a privilege to speak to you this morning about my nomination for appointment to the Workers' Compensation Commission. Thank you for having me here today, and thanks to Governor Malloy for this appointment and for his confidence in me to serve the citizens of Connecticut as a workers' compensation commissioner. I am married to Dr. Robert Rutstein and have two daughters, Catherine Olivia Rutstein, who is 19, and Caroline Grace Rutstein, who is 17, and they are both here with me today.

I was born and raised in Norwich, Connecticut, and graduated from the Norwich Free Academy in 1979. In 1983, I graduated cum laude from the University of Connecticut with a degree in political science and a minor in history. After college, I worked for the Senate Clerk's Office here in the General Assembly for a year, then attended Stetson University College of Law in St. Petersburg, Florida, from which I graduated in 1987. I was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1987 and the Connecticut Bar in 1988. I
returned to Connecticut after law school to pursue my passion, public policy. As clerk of the Select Committee on Family in the Workplace, I was fortunate to help with the work of making Connecticut the first state to adopt the Family and Medical Leave Act. Connecticut's law became the basis for the national FMLA law, and healthcare and administrative law became the foundation of my career.

I then served as a research attorney for the Senate Majority Caucus and later as legislative liaison to the Senate in the O'Neill administration. From 1990 to 1991, I was manager of government relations at United Technologies Corporation, then left UTC to become the director of government relations for Sullivan and LeShane. From 1991 to 1995, I represented clients such as the State Medical Society, State Dental Association, the Anesthesiologists, Bridgeport Hospital, and the Connecticut Association of Healthcare Facilities. In 1995, I was named executive vice-president of the Connecticut Association of Healthcare Facilities, where I remained until 2009. From 2009 through January of 2015, I was the CEO of TMF Healthcare Consulting, LLC, and was retained as the in-house legal expert on the Affordable Care Act at the American Healthcare Association. In that position, I traveled the country teaching member employers their responsibilities under the Affordable Care Act and established a member health insurance program for the Association.

Since February 2015, I have served as deputy commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services, where I am responsible for providing
oversight of the state's small agency human resource functions, the automobile fleet, and workers' compensation for state employees as well as support for the State Insurance Risk Management Board and the Claims Commission. I have learned workers' compensation from the state's perspective as an employer, which has enabled me to recognize the importance of the role of safety committees, the efficient review and processing of claims, and implementing strategies to enable an injured worker the opportunity to return to work safely as soon as possible. My experience in healthcare policy and administrative law uniquely positioned me to enter the Workers' Compensation Training Program and hit the ground running. I am excited and eager to begin work as a workers' compensation commissioner, and I ask for your support on my appointment. I am happy to answer any questions -- any questions the committee may have.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you very much, Attorney Fatone, and a very impressive resume, [coughing] and it was always a pleasure working with you when you were here representing healthcare providers, nursing homes and the like, back in the day.

TONI FATONE: Thank you, Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Questions from members of the committee? And I see that we're joined by Senator Gomes. Nice to see you, Senator. Wow, nobody has any questions. [Background talking] Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, yes, okay. Sorry.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. I appreciate it. Now I --
could you just summarize your experience with workers' compensation?

TONI FATONE: So, the state's Workers' Compensation Program has its own director, Robert Giuditta. Robert is a direct report to me. I did not handle the claims specifically. There is an entire office that handles that, but the larger claims all came to me for review. And bigger policy decisions on things like opioid use and putting together a provider panel working with other agencies to establish safety committees and the role of safety committees working with the director and the other state agencies in state government to ensure that wherever and whenever light duty jobs were available for an employee to return to, I would work with those agencies and their workers' comp lead to get those -- those positions established. But the actual claims and processing that would create a conflict, I have had no -- no role in. That is the strict purview of the Workers' Compensation Office for the state of Connecticut.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Have you ever -- what is your experience with workers' compensation hearings?

TONI FATONE: I do not attend the workers' compensation hearings. I have had the pleasure to travel with Chairman Morelli to begin attending hearings -- workers' compensation hearings -- and begin the training process for workers' compensation, but I have never represented a client in a workers' compensation hearing.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but you've been to the hearings?
TONI FATONE: I have been to the hearings, yes, and the Workers' Compensation Commission has a very extensive training program available to both those candidates with extensive experience and candidates, like me, with lesser experience.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, thank you. You, in your questionnaire, you indicate -- question 24 asks to submit or cite five memorandum of law or briefs you had written as writing samples. In your whole career, you don't have any briefs or memoranda that you've written?

TONI FATONE: There were boxes of work materials over the years in my moves that have been lost. In the last -- in the last ten years, my work with the American Healthcare Association, were subject to privilege, and I could not get them and make them part of a public hearing. The work on the Affordable Care Act and different aspects and decisions and implications of the Affordable Care Act would be the most recent work. I don't have any legal memorandums from my work at the Department of Administrative Services, and unfortunately the prior -- the prior materials that had been boxed and moved, I no longer have possession of.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so nothing you've done was filed in court or in any public venue?

TONI FATONE: No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. All right, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you, Representative Dubitsky. The Ranking Member, Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning.

TONI FATONE: Good morning.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Congratulations on your nomination.

TONI FATONE: Thank you.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Just a quick few clarifying questions. I believe you alluded to this in your responses to the questions posed, but your response to number 23, where it says to summarize your legal experience, etc., you have Workers’ Comp Division is a direct report to me at DAS. And again, you may have, you know, touched upon that, but when you say a direct report to you -- if you can describe that in a little bit more detail.

TONI FATONE: So, Commissioner Currey, the Commissioner of DAS, and I have taken the organizational chart at the Department of Administrative Services. She has a number of divisions that are a direct report to her on a regular basis, and I have a number of divisions as deputy commissioner that are a direct report to me. Commissioner Curry overseas the entire agency, but on a day-to-day basis for issues that arise, we've divided the org chart. Workers' Compensation, the Claims Commission, State Insurance Risk Management Board, the Auto Fleet, and the Smart HR Division are
direct reports to me. So, Robert Giuditta, who is the director of Workers' Compensation for the state of Connecticut, is one of the directors that reports to me, and I provide support to their division.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And when you say reporting, is that something that happens on a monthly basis, or is it just as the claims come in? Exactly -- if you can describe how that works.

TONI FATONE: So, we meet regularly with the directors on a monthly basis, but if there were an issue that arose today, Bob would call me to discuss the larger, more serious claims. In reverse, if I was aware of a DOT accident or a highway accident involving a state trooper on a news report that came in and Bob hadn't seen it, I would notify Bob so that Gallagher Bassett, the TPA for the state of Connecticut's Workers' Compensation Program could be made aware and get a nurse manager involved as soon as possible.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, in your appointment, or once you're -- you're confirmed and you become a workers' compensation commissioner, if you have an employee that a claim has been reviewed by you through your prior employment, is that something that you feel that you would be conflicted out and would have to recuse yourself.

TONI FATONE: I would. There -- there have been very -- there are not claims on a regular basis where I would know the employee's name or remember the employee's name, but I will be very aware of the state cases, and if there should be, I would recuse myself and notify the chairman accordingly.
REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And do you believe that you'd be able to do your due diligence and actually inquire and do a conflicts check and not just rely on pure memory.

TONI FATONE: Yes.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Okay. Do you foresee any other situations where there might be a conflict? For example, having represented the state, if you have prior knowledge of a particular department where there were some safety risks, maybe knowledge that wouldn't have come out in the claim before you, do you believe that at any given time during a hearing or presentation of the matter, that you'd be able to stop and recuse yourself.

TONI FATONE: I absolutely believe I would and I could.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, if I may inquire, how long -- or when did you go through the Judicial Selection Committee?

TONI FATONE: I did not go through the Judicial Selection Committee.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Okay. No other questions. Thank you and congratulations on your nomination.

TONI FATONE: Thank you so much.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you. And just for clarification for us, through our staff, do workers' comp commissioners or family court magistrates have to go through that process, or do they -- can their
name just be popped in front of the governor, and
the governor says, yeah, I'm gonna run with that
person?

ATTORNEY O'SHEA:  Our understanding is that the
family support magistrates and the workers' comp
commissioners do not go before the Judicial
Selection Commission.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):  All right. Thank you. I
think that helps everybody to understand the
process. Any other questions from members of the
committee at this time? Okay, well, seeing none,
Attorney Fatone, it's great to see you again. I
can't believe it's been probably 26 years since we
first met over in the Legislative Office Building
where you were probably lobbying me then.

TONI FATONE:  [Laughing] We were both children,
Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Well, that's very kind of you
to say that. [Laughing] But I view you as highly
qualified for this position. You have a unique
perspective. You've certainly been involved in the
process for a number of years, albeit not in the
formal hearing part of it, but again, we've had
folks over the years come before us with far less
expertise in working through public service and the
private sector. And I think that you'll be a real
asset to our state, so thank you very much.

TONI FATONE:  Thank you so much.
SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Okay. [Coughing] Donald R. Green of Meriden to be a family support magistrate. Good morning, Attorney Green.

DONALD GREEN: Good morning.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Please raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm, as the case may be, that the information you will provide to this committee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God or under penalty of perjury?

DONALD GREEN: I do.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you, sir, and if you'd like, you can give a brief statement to the committee. That would be terrific.

DONALD GREEN: Good morning, Chairman Doyle, Chairman Kissel, Chairman Tong, Representative Rebimbas, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I am honored and humbled to be here today and thank you for your consideration. I would also like to thank Governor Malloy for nominating me for appointment to a Family Support Magistrate. I'm here with my beautiful wife, Bonnie, who's sitting behind me. My way of backgrounds, I was born and raised in Meriden, and I continue to reside there. I am a graduate of Trinity College and the University of Connecticut School of Law.

I worked in the Office of the Attorney General as an Assistant Attorney General for over 22 years. My primary assignment has been in the Child Protection Department, where I prosecute child abuse, child neglect, and termination of parental rights cases.
I have also represented the Department of Children and Families and UConn Health Center before the Office of the Claims Commissioner, Freedom of Information Commission, and the Commission on Human Rights and opportunities.

I have been fortunate to have excellent opportunities for growth at the Office of the Attorney General. My duties have expanded in many different areas, and I have received several outstanding performance ratings in this role. I am excited [coughing] and looking to further expand my skills and serve the public in a new role with greater responsibility. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the citizens of the state of Connecticut for the last 22 years as an Assistant Attorney General. I would be most grateful for your support and approval for the position of Family Support Magistrate. Thank you for this opportunity, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you very much, Counselor. Chairman Tong.

REP. TONG (147TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You testified that you've been in the Attorney General's Office for 22 years.

DONALD GREEN: That is correct.

REP. TONG (147TH): Why are you leaving now? [Laughing] Is there a problem --?

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):  We don’t view this as a portent, Mr. Chairman.  [Laughing]  Ah, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in, and congratulations on your nomination.

DONALD GREEN:  Thank you.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  I see you have extensive litigation experience, am I correct?

DONALD GREEN:  That is correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Okay, I see on question number 24 -- submit three -- three written legal documents that evidence your practice of law -- have you submitted those?

DONALD GREEN:  I did.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Okay. We didn't get copies of that. Could you tell me what they were?

DONALD GREEN:  I brought a copy with me, but they are -- there's one memorandum of law in support of a motion to strike that was filed with the Office of the Claims Commissioner.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH):  Can I just -- I just wanna intervene here. Representative Dubitsky, they are in the file, and the file -- we don't make copies
for everyone, but you have a complete right to go into our office area and read those if you'd like.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, I appreciate that. I am satisfied if you'd just explain to me what they are.

DONALD GREEN: As indicated, there was one -- there was a motion to stroke and an accompanying memoranda -- memorandum of law that was filed with the Office of the Claims Commissioner on a claim that was filed by a person who was assaulted by an individual who was in DCF's care. That claim is still pending before the Office of the Claims Commissioner. There was also a motion to dismiss that I filed before the Office of the Claims Commissioner as well in response to a complaint that was filed by a mother who -- a mother who had children removed from her care and placed in DCF's care. And the final one, I believe, was a post-trial brief where there was a [throat-clearing] consolidated termination of parental rights hearing as well as a transfer of guardianship hearing.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, thank you. I appreciate that, and I'll probably take a look at those in the process. Now, I assume because you have worked in this field with child support and prosecuting child abuse that you are aware that there is a -- a fairly vocal group of pro se litigants that believe that they are being treated unfairly by the system. Are you aware of that?

DONALD GREEN: I am aware of that, yes.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. What do you think -- as a family support magistrate, what do you think your role would be in trying to make sure that the system is fair and that every litigant that comes to you, whether they're represented or not, leaves feeling that they have been treated fairly, even if the decision was not in their favor?

DONALD GREEN: As a family support magistrate, or any arbitrator of the law, I believe that pro se litigants should always have access to courts and that they should be given a full and fair understanding of the process and procedure, so that they may properly prepare before the court and represent themselves.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Is there --? Obviously, the legal system is complicated, and people go to school and practice for a long time to learn how the process works, and coming in as a pro se litigant, being thrown in the middle of -- it could be a trial for the custody of their child -- without that background, it gives them an inherent disadvantage. How do you -- how would you, as a magistrate, address that disparity in knowledge when the system is essentially geared towards lawyers?

DONALD GREEN: Well, I believe that -- it's my understanding that pro se litigants are advised [throat-clearing] at the outset what their rights are and what -- what procedure they would need to flag -- need to follow, if they were to choose to represent themselves. In my experience, judges will always advise parents, in particular, in child protection, that they have a right to counsel, that there's certain laws that are unique to child
protection that they will need to understand, or at least get a fair understanding so that they can represent themselves. So, I would -- I would follow the same approach in explaining to the pro se litigants what their rights are within a particular case that came before me.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, I think everybody knows they have a right to counsel. The problem is, obviously, that counsel is very expensive and not everybody can afford to have an attorney or in cases that often drag out for many years. And there's also a situation with guardians ad litem, which are also very expensive. So, I guess what I'm tryin' to get out of you is how would you -- if you're in a case with a pro se litigant, and the other side has a highly paid attorney, how do you -- how would you approach this to try to make sure that each side had a fair shot at getting what they're looking for in that court?

DONALD GREEN: It's my understanding that 90 to 95 percent of the litigants who appear before the family support magistrate are pro se litigants. And I know that they are given a thorough understanding of what their rights are and what they can do in that -- to represent themselves, and they can choose to have an attorney to represent them. So, they're given a full and fair understanding of what the process and procedure is.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, you're -- I don't wanna put words in your mouth, but are you saying that you would not take into consideration the fact that one side has an attorney and one side does not.
DONALD GREEN: I would have to treat each case individually based on its own merit and in accordance with what's before me -- what law is before me -- and then make a determination as to whether or how to rule in any particular case.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

DONALD GREEN: But I think giving the -- giving the litigants an explanation that they have a right to an attorney, that the court's not able to advise them on legal matters, that's all that we can do under the law, under statute.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Do you feel that advising a pro se litigant on procedure is giving them legal advice?

DONALD GREEN: I guess it would depend on the circumstance. I would have to have something before me to make that determination.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): What is your feeling of the effectiveness and value of the guardian ad litem system that we have right now?

DONALD GREEN: I don't really have an opinion on the guardian ad litem system. I understand in family support court they don't deal with the guardian ad litem system, and neither does the child protection portion of the juvenile court, only to the extent that if there is a conflict between the child's -- what the child wants and what's in the child's best interest, then a guardian ad litem in child protection court is appointed by the court. And a guardian ad litem in child protection court is not a
paid independent guardian ad litem. It's someone who was already a part of a panel of attorney that's employed by the Office of the Public Defender.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, you -- have you had any experience with that system -- guardian ad litem?

DONALD GREEN: I have, yes, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And is -- and what's your feeling of whether it works well or not?

DONALD GREEN: It works. In some cases it works. Other cases, you know, I don't find it necessary to have a guardian ad litem appointed, for instance, where a child is -- a younger child, say under the age of 12 and under, where he or she has an attorney appointed once a case is brought to superior court. The attorney will serve as the child's attorney and guardian ad litem, serves in a dual role. But if there is a conflict, which would be determined by the child's attorney that a guardian ad litem should be appointed, then that decision is made by the court after brought up -- after being brought up to the -- brought up by the child's attorney.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And you think that's pretty much how it should be?

DONALD GREEN: I think it works. I think it's fair.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. All right. Well, thank you. Thank you very much for your answers. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
DONALD GREEN: You're welcome.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you, Representative Dubitsky. Any other questions from members? Ranking Member, Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning still.

DONALD GREEN: Good morning.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Congratulations on your nomination, and as I read through your questionnaire and look into your professional work history, I must commend you. I mean, you certainly, in my opinion, have handled some of the most toughest, difficult, challenging cases that I think our state faces on a regular basis.

DONALD GREEN: Thank you.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): So, I think, you know, your qualifications for this position are certainly untouchable. Are you prepared that as a magistrate certainly the issues that'll be before are much more narrow than the scope of the issues that you were exposed to through the Attorney General's Office?

DONALD GREEN: I am, yes.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And again, having reviewed everything, I think you're most qualified for it. The only thing, I would certainly just let you know that at least in my professional experience going before magistrates, the work that they do from the bench certainly is very important, but undoubtedly I
know that you're gonna fill this role. But certainly how they do treat the individuals that come before them, that each individual case, for example, you're gonna have cases that are gonna have claims outside of the state of Connecticut versus inside the state of Connecticut and all because that you have another state that might be requesting certain things. I think every individual has the right before you to ask for the financial discovery and things of that nature, and I think that your background and experience with a lot of these issues, already family issues, is going to be an asset on the bench in hopefully having each individual that goes before you have, as you had already indicated, a fair opportunity in that regard. So, I commend you, and I congratulate you in this position.

DONALD GREEN: Thank you.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Representative, is that it?

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Yes, Mr. Chairman, but I do enjoy saying Mr. Chairman to you. So, I'll take the opportunity to once again say, thank you, Mr. Chairman, no further questions.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Yeah, I'm just gonna wait till Halley's Comet comes around the next time. [Laughing] Any other questions from members of the committee? Yes.

SENATOR MCCORORY (2ND): Good morning. How ya doin' there, Mr. Chairman?

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Very good, Senator.
SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND): That's a good thing, a good thing. Happy New Year to everyone. How ya doin' there, Mr. Green? How are you today?

DONALD GREEN: I'm doing well, Senator. How are you?

SENATOR MCCRORY (2ND): I'm just wonderful. I'm glad to see you here. Clearly, you are a very fine attorney, who I've known for a number of years, and I think, like my colleague said, doing work representing the Department of Children and Families, you have had your hands in a lot of good litigation, I could expect. As we move forward in your new capacity and hopefully once you get past this board here, I would like to commend you and expect that you continue in doing the great work that you've been doing. You are truly a person who -- I would say a role model for people all over the state, especially young men -- young men of color. Your expertise speaks for itself. Your education, being a graduate of Trinity College, speaks for itself. And I highly commend and support you in this process of becoming a family support magistrate, and I wish you the best once you begin your new career. Thank you.

DONALD GREEN: Thank you, Senator McCrory.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): And I'd like to associate myself with the remarks of Senator McCrory, whom I enjoy serving with and we both share the first English settlement in the state of Connecticut, [laughing] and commend Senator McCrory on his striving to diversify folks that are educators
throughout the state of Connecticut. And I would also point out that we, as a committee, have striven mightily over the years to diversify all areas of our judicial branch, this being one of them, and it's a difficult job. So I think not only will you bring great expertise and professionalism, but you will be there as a role model for individuals that come before you as well. Other remarks or questions by members of the committee? Seeing none. Thank you very much, sir.

DONALD GREEN: Thank you.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Do we have -- [crosstalk] Representative Santiago? We're now to the members of the public, and Representative, you're the only name that I have at this time, so take as much time as you'd like. [Laughing]

REP. SANTIAGO (84TH): Thank you. Good morning and Happy New Year to everyone, to all my colleagues. Senator Paul Doyle, Senator John Kissel, Representative William Tong, Representative Rebimbas, thank you for giving me the opportunity to say just a couple of words about Donald Green. We know him as Don in Meriden, born and raised in Meriden, and still lives in Meriden, giving back to the community. He grew up at the Mills Development -- Mills Housing right in the center of town and filled with many families, growing families in the city of Meriden, where low-income people live, and this is one of the reasons why I'm coming here to support him. He used being born in Meriden, raised in Meriden, and he used the outlet of the Boys Club at that time. Now it's the Boys and Girls Club. At that time, it was the Boys Club. He spent many
hours in his young years going to the Boys Club, which is only a few blocks from the Mills and involved in sports, mentoring young people and coaching teams at the Boys Club, and he's still very active as a member of the Boys Club.

He loves working with kids. He was a mentor, like I said before, for young people, and giving back to the community, which is very important. He is revered as a leader in our community, as a role model for young women and people of color, and I am here to support Donald Green for family magistrate. His experience and knowledge will make him be more sensitive to the decisions that he will be making. I am confident he will make those decisions because of the expertise, as you see in his resume, and according to the law and fairness, and he will be good for the process. So I am, again, here in support of Donald Green, and I'm very proud to be here in support of him, even though he doesn't live in my district. He lives in Representative Abercrombie's district, and she's also here. But he is -- it doesn't matter what district he lives in, he is just an advocate for many families and children in our community, so I'm hoping that you will be supporting him. Thank you.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you very much, Representative Santiago. I appreciate your taking the time this morning to come up and testify before this committee. The Ranking Member, Representative Rebimbas. [Crosstalk] Okay, any questions for the good representative from members of the committee? Seeing none. Thank you very much.
REP. SANTIAGO (84TH): Thank you so much and have a great day.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Well, I don't have any other names on my list, but if there's anybody else from the public that would like to testify on either of these nominees, that would be terrific. Going once, twice, forever hold your peace. Okay. Seeing none at this time, I have called this public hearing to a conclusion.