

I cannot attend the hearing re Raised Bill No. 844 on Friday, February 22, 2019, but want to voice my opposition to it.

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I want to express my opposition to the Raised Bill No. 844.

Court reporters make the legal record. Without us, our justice system and the practice of all law would most likely grind to a halt. Even though sometimes we end up getting paid less than minimum wage on certain jobs, we work on average more than six days a week at all hours of the day and night, and we endure daily the heavy toll this profession takes on us physically and mentally, we still love what we do, and we proudly continue because we believe in the justice system and know our important role in it.

Yet our profession, instead of being protected and appreciated by our legislature and the legal field, has been consistently under attack, especially as of late.

This bill, initiated by the Connecticut Trial Association, on the face of it, appears to just be pricing limits (and formatting preferences, which most of us use already).

Since I was first licensed in 1994, the rate per page (how court reporters are paid for their work), was \$1.25 less per page on average than it is today. So over the past 25 years, we have not even seen cost-of-living increases or raises that attempt to keep up with inflation. No court reporter I've ever met or heard of is retiring after having made well over enough for a comfortable retirement. Yet our profession is underappreciated and continuously under attack, usually by using us as a place to cut costs. Due to this, there is a severe shortage of court reporters starting around the country.

To add insult to injury, with the introduction of this currently proposed bill trying to ADD new regulations to our field, it comes on the heels of the recently passed legislation which believed us to be of such little significance that our legislature passed a bill which enabled the Department of Consumer Protection to DEREGULATE our state licenses. We all show "Inactive Pursuant to Public Act 17-71" now. The DCP's website erroneously and misleadingly still shows that they do issue and regulate our licenses and require continuing education even though this bill was enacted and we haven't been licensed by the state for well over a year. At this time Connecticut has the dubious distinction of being the only state to deregulate its court reporters' licenses.

Imagine the DMV no longer issuing or regulating driver's licenses although the DMV didn't really make that public and still had their licensing requirements and information on their website. Then imagine car manufacturers introducing proposed legislation on how and what the public should drive and how much they must spend on their vehicle. The whole premise is ludicrous.

If anyone -- the CT Trial Association, our legislators, any citizen -- comes across a problem with a specific court reporter or firm, it would be better addressed by, first, having our state go back to licensing court reporters (and also firms). Then the DCP could have the proper authority to monitor and take action against the select few for unfair pricing and/or continued formatting issues.

I appreciate your dedication to our state's well-being. Please feel free to contact me for any reason regarding this bill or the Court Reporting profession at any time.



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