

Probate Redistricting Commission
Members Comments
August 31, 2009

David W. Hopper

The Probate Assembly's proposed fifty Court map was the result of months of hard work by all of the members of the Probate Assembly and the staff of the Probate Administrator's Office. Said map was completed in consultation with each member's respective local and state representatives and took into consideration the mandate of the legislation, as well as appropriate travel routes, geographical size, available Court facilities, previous Court consolidations and the impact it would have on the Children's Courts and on appeals to the Superior Court. During the process, the great majority of the proposed Courts were arrived at with the vast support of the Judges from those respective areas. There were several areas, however, where consensus could not be reached and if the Probate Assembly had not acted, the map would have consisted of approximately 56 Courts. But, upon the request of the members of the Probate Assembly, the Assembly's Executive Committee met and, in consultation with a number of the Probate Judges from the effected areas, was able to complete the proposed fifty Court map, which was overwhelmingly approved by the Probate Assembly.

Generally, the areas the Executive Committee addressed in order to complete the fifty Court map, are the same areas which were addressed by a majority of the public. In light of the aforementioned, it would seem most appropriate to accept the majority of the Probate Assembly's proposed map and to solely focus on those few areas of public concern. Certainly, if it is the will of the people of the Northeast and the Northwest corners of the State to realign the two proposed Courts in each of their respective regions, I would have no objection, since neither request adds an additional Court. The problem with most, if not all of the other areas of concern, is that to address said concerns will necessitate adding Courts beyond the fifty Court limit. To consolidate other Courts, in order to offset the requested additional Courts, creates a new set of problems, which would most certainly generate a host of other concerns raised by those members of the public, who would be in the newly consolidated areas.

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers and I look forward to hearing the comments and concerns of the other commission members.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Frederick P. Leaf

I had been a lifelong resident of New Haven (more recently a resident of Branford), however my law practice is primarily in New Haven and its surrounding communities.

Also, I am a former Vice Chairman of the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven. I am very familiar with the New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court and the challenges faced by the court and the judges who service it.

You will recall that this court was the "Pilot Court" for all of the other Children's Probate Courts which followed around the state. It was and remains by far the busiest Children's Court, and in my opinion the truest to the original concept. It presently services ten Probate Districts.

The plan proposed by the Probate Court Assembly reduces the number of Probate Judges in the New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court service area from **10 to 6!** As a consequence it would dramatically increase the workload of the 6 remaining Probate Judges. In other words a large amount of the workload, in the case of New Haven, would fall upon the New Haven Probate Judge. Without the assistance of the other Probate Judges in the area I fear that the court would collapse under the workload. Judge Keyes and his colleagues would be working 24/7.

In order to preserve the level of service and commitment of the New Haven Children's Probate Court and quite frankly the children that so need its services I believe that this committee as part of its report should recommend to the legislature that the powers of the Administrative Judge of any of the Children's Courts who are not sitting Probate Judges should have the power to hear and decide those children's cases that are adjudicated in that children's court, even if that individual is no longer a sitting Probate Judge.

I understand and am sensitive to the concerns of those regions where issues of geography exist, however, the good work of the New Haven Children's Probate Court would be dramatically compromised by the overwhelming increase in workload of the remaining judges. Unless we can compensate for the loss of 4 judges the mission of the New Haven Children's court I am afraid would fail.

Respectfully submitted

Marilyn Giuliano

I've included proposals, suggestions and commentary on several redistricting initiatives:

The Old Saybrook Probate District should remain as suggested by the commission to include: Old Saybrook, Westbrook, Essex, Deep River, Killingworth, Chester, Haddam, Lyme - and to include Clinton. This configuration excludes East Haddam, and East Haddam is in agreement with their exclusion. This 9-town configuration is consistent with every town's testimony, and includes the sentiments of Guilford and Madison who wish to exclude Clinton from their proposed district.

The Norwalk Probate District should remain as suggested by the commission to include the towns of Norwalk and Wilton. The Probate Assembly's suggestion to form a non-

contiguous district which would include Darien, New Canaan, Weston and Westport (surrounding the Norwalk/Wilton district) makes sense for the area and testimony received by the commission is supportive of these configurations.

Branford and North Branford have agreed to become a district as suggested, and this should receive the commission's support.

Bethany-Orange-Woodbridge seeks to become the Amity Probate District. If this configuration (which received substantial public testimony) is not accepted, it would make sense to join Bethany and Woodbridge, with Orange aligning with Milford. If Woodbridge cannot fit into that configuration, Woodbridge could be served by aligning with Ansonia, Derby and Seymour.

Shelton and Stratford wish to maintain independent probate courts and this is consistent with the Assembly's recommendations.

I stand in support of testimony that Andover, Hebron and Columbia be aligned with a small- towns type configuration that could include Coventry and Colchester. This configuration is respectful and congruent of a regional, small town probate district.

Robert. F. Frankel

I wish to go on record in opposing the proposed district of Westport, Weston, New Canaan and Darien. The concept of a district that is noncontiguous is repugnant on its face. Moreover, to my knowledge, the notion of a noncontiguous district was never contemplated nor intended by the legislature. The addition of Wilton to these four towns is a simple solution.

Fred Anthony

At our last meeting it was requested that members of the commission forward written comments outlining matters which we believe may merit further review and discussion by the commission at our next meeting to facilitate discussion of the various issues before us.

As members of the commission are aware, redistricting 117 existing districts into a statutorily mandated 50 court plan presents many difficulties. The statute provides that the Connecticut Probate Assembly prepare the first map for consideration by the commission. I am proud as a member and as the President Judge of the Connecticut Probate Assembly of the hard work, thoughtful determination and results that the judges were able to achieve. The map presented by the assembly was the result of many months or regional and statewide meetings. I will not restate the process which resulted in the map presented for consideration. The process was heavily dependant on a "regional approach" to allow each respective area of the state the ability to devise a plan that best

addressed their area. However, I would point out that the map received overwhelming approval by the Probate Assembly by judges in all areas of the state.

Many areas of concern that were brought forth in our public hearing were previously considered by the Probate Assembly. I might suggest that some may certainly merit further discussion by the commission, including:

Avon, Farmington, Simsbury, Canton, Burlington

Bethany

Clinton

Northwest Corner

As stated, the judges of the various regional probate regions and the assembly as a whole have already considered the above areas. However, I remain willing to consider the suggestions of other members of the commission which many alleviate the concerns voiced by others.

Daniel Caruso

On the whole, I support the Probate Assembly's proposed fifty Court map. Based upon the input from the judges most familiar with their locals following consultation with the leaders of those communities, it attempts to be sensitive to the needs of those whom we serve. Nevertheless, and provided the maximum number of courts is not exceeded, I could be supportive of realigning the following:

1. The Clinton district to the lower Connecticut River towns;
2. Kent and Warren to New Milford district;
3. Hartland to the Winchester/North Canaan district;
4. Union to the Stafford/Enfield district; and
5. Bethany to the Hamden district.

Other areas which may merit our attention are Farmington/Avon; Colchester, and possibly Ridgefield/Newtown.

I support the Westport/Weston-New Canaan/Darien district "as is". The configuration creates a synergy of cases to the benefit of all involved. Contrary to certain assertions, the travel between the two areas is not a problem given the I-95, the Merritt Parkway and Rt. 1 which provide easy access (I say this as having filled the vacancy in the judgeship in 2001 wherein I traveled to and from Fairfield weekly). Moreover, the citizens of many other towns will, as a result of this redistricting, traverse other towns to appear in courts which are likewise non-contiguous and at greater and less commuter friendly distances. Finally, the alternatives proposed would constitute the first instance of the commission breaking a district, and in this instance, one which has existed and worked well for 200 hundred years.

The Probate Assembly's proposed fifty Court map should otherwise be acceptable.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Ann Follacchio

***Ann Follacchio's
Proposed Redistricting Plan***

<u>District #</u>	<u>Towns</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>WWL</u>	<u>POP</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>WWL</u>
1	Greenwich	61,871	4757	61,871		4757
2	Stamford	118,475	6463	118,475		6463
3	Darien Norwalk	20,246 101,171	1152 4817	121,417		5969
4	New Canaan Wilton Ridgefield Westport	19,890 23,872 26,642	1680 942 2210	70,404		4832
5	Fairfield	57,548	4464	57,548		4464
6	Easton Monroe Trumbull Weston	7,272 19,247 34,243 10,270	3337	71,032		3337
7	Bridgeport	136,695	8897	136,695		8897
8	Stratford Shelton	49,015 40,011	4017 2901	89,026		6918
9	Orange Milford	13,813 55,445	1052 3839	69,258		4891
10	Seymour Ansonia Derby Woodbridge	16,249 18,650 12,481 9,201	2781 903	56,581		3684
11	West Haven	52,676	6144	52,676		6144
12	New Haven	123,932	12709	123,932		12709

13	North Haven	24,077	1752	52,634	4090
	East Haven	28,741	2338		
14	Hamden	57,698	3871	57,698	3871

15	Oxford	12,537	532	55,747	2815
	Naugatuck	31,933	1964		
	Beacon Falls	5,711			
	Bethany	5,566	319		
16	Middlebury	7,146		130,901	9858
	Waterbury	107,455	9858		
	Wolcott	16,300			
17	Bethlehem	3,580		57,689	4881
	Roxbury	2,319	220		
	Southbury	19,678	2740		
	Watertown	22,347			
	Woodbury	9,765	1921		
18	Danbury	79,226	4296	79,226	4296
19	Bridgewater			65,130	2825
	Brookfield	16,413	877		
	New Fairfield	14,248	647		
	New Milford	30,323	1301		
	Sherman	4,146			
20	Bethel	18,514	825	54,144	2842
	Redding	8,840	671		
	Newtown	26,790	1346		
21	Burlington	9,143	319	46,412	3471
	Cornwall	1,489	149		
	Harwinton	5,600	393		
	Kent	2,970			
	Litchfield	8,750	1393		
	Morris	2,381			
	Sharon	3,058	305		
	Thomaston	7,932	371		
	Warren	1,385			
	Washington	3,704	541		

22	Barkhamsted	3,708		74,259	5593
	Canaan	1,103	110		
	Colebrook	1,546			
	Goshen	3,154			
	Hartland	2,090			
	New Hartford	6,794	558		
	Norfolk	1,678	167		
	North Canaan	3,338	339		
	Salisbury	4,047	404		
	Torrington	35,931	3124		
	Winchester	10,870	891		
23	Plymouth	12,011	713	90,115	7178
	Bristol	60,911	5149		
	Plainville	17,193	1316		
24	Southington	42,142	2837	80,308	4841
	Cheshire	28,884	2004		
	Prospect	9,282			
25	Berlin	90,918	6521	90,918	6521
	New Britain				
26	Farmington	25,084	2068	85,570	9360
	West Hartford	60,486	7292		
27	Avon	17,333	1011	71,671	4601
	Canton	10,086	606		
	Simsbury	23,559	1128		
	Bloomfield	20,693	1856		
28	Granby	11,187	652	72,641	4127
	East Granby	5,082			
	Suffield	15,127	870		
	Windsor	28,754	1821		
	Windsor Locks	12,491	784		
29	Hartford	124,563	11349	124,563	11349
30	Newington	29,586	5947	74,478	5947
	Rocky Hill	18,835			
	Wethersfield	26,057			

31	East Hartford	48,697	3295	85,254	5249
	East Windsor	10,563	1954		
	South Windsor	26,030			
32	Enfield	45,011	2559	67,647	3842
	Somers				
	Stafford	23,387	1323		
	Union				
33	Ashford	4,453	305	69,399	4581
	Ellington	14,370	3208		
	Tolland	14,699	1068		
	Vernon	29,672			
	Willington	6,205			
34	Andover	3,211	648	69,580	4058
	Bolton	5,142			
	Columbia	5,370			
	Manchester	55,857	3410		
35	Hebron	9,232	382	58,289	2985
	Glastonbury	33,169	1647		
	Marlborough	6,351	315		
	Portland	9,537	641		
36	Cromwell	13,540		72,702	6269
	Durham	7,358			
	Middlefield	4,276			
	Middletown	47,528	6269		
37	Meriden	59,225	4590	59,225	4590
38	Wallingford	44,679	3741	88,069	6902
	Branford	28,984	2197		
	North Branford	14,406	964		
39	Clinton	13,578	847	54,744	3079
	Guilford	22,373	1082		
	Madison	18,793	1150		

40	Chester	3,384	444	46,210	4126
	Deep River	4,673	436		
	Essex	6,753	883		
	Haddam	7,800	341		
	Killingworth	6,443	382		
	Old Saybrook	10,539	1032		
	Westbrook	6,618	608		
41	Lyme	2,076	207	47,895	2954
	East Lyme	18,690	1131		
	Montville	19,744	906		
	Old Lyme	7,385	710		
42	New London	25,979	5713	44,788	5713
	Waterford	18,809			
43	Groton	42,234	2525	80,886	4987
	Ledyard	15,097	626		
	N. Stonington	5,212	292		
	Stonington	18,343	1544		
44	Bozrah	2,444	207	58,114	2780
	Colchester	22,849	1351		
	East Hampton	12,548	440		
	East Haddam	8,852	531		
	Salem	4,102	251		
	Lebanon	7,319			
45	Franklin	1,896		64,371	4347
	Griswold	11,390	610		
	Lisbon	4,188			
	Preston	4,894			
	Norwich	36,408	3737		
	Sprague	2,986			
	Voluntown	2,609			
46	Chaplin			64,646	3441
	Coventry	12,215			
	Hampton	2,118	93		
	Mansfield	24,779	1502		
	Scotland	1,724			
	Windham	23,810	1846		

47	Brooklyn	7,866	785	82,464	5874
	Canterbury	5,102			
	Eastford	1,790	225		
	Killingly	17,710	1332		
	Plainfield	15,453	1171		
	Pomfret	4,165	263		
	Putnam	9,292	1006		
	Sterling	3,657			
	Thompson	9,231	762		
	Woodstock	8,188	330		

Kathleen Murphy

Rep. Bob Godfrey, Chairman
 Probate Redistricting Commission
 186 Newington Road
 West Hartford, CT 06110

Dear Rep. Godfrey:

A main justification for consolidation was the need for probate courts to be open forty hours per week as are superior courts. However, Substitute House Bill No. 6385, Public Act No. 09-114 requires probate judges to work, on average, twenty hours per week. This means that a probate judge may work less than twenty hours in some weeks. This is inconsistent with every other state employee who must work a minimum of twenty hours per week in order to receive health insurance. Further, this allows the majority of probate judges to receive a salary of \$110,000 per year, free health insurance, and pension benefits while continuing to work in their private practice of law. This contrasts with all other Connecticut judges who are prohibited from having a law practice and must work forty hours per week.

PA 09-114 requires that the number of Connecticut probate courts be reduced from one hundred seventeen to fifty, resulting in a loss of sixty-seven probate judges. The new legislation also creates other types of probate judges including magistrate judges, referee judges, and appellate judges. With respect to magistrate judges, "Some of the probate judges losing their jobs could find themselves working in the system as magistrates. They would be available to fill in as needed on probate dockets that are too heavy for one judge to handle." (*Connecticut Law Tribune*, May 25, 2009). "The idea was that the pool of judges would include those who lost their jobs in the redistricting, but it could include any former probate judge as long as they're not 70 years old," said Judge Knierim, Probate Court Administrator (*Connecticut Law Tribune*, May 25, 2009). Magistrate judges will earn \$50 per hour and may participate in continuing education. There is no statutory requirement for magistrate judges to complete continuing education.

In essence, PA 09-114 will enable a probate judge to work, on average, twenty hours per week, receive \$110,000 per year, free health insurance, and pension benefits, continue the practice of law, and freely call upon magistrate judges. The principal driving forces behind PA 09-114 were cost savings and increased professionalism. Allowing probate judges to work twenty hours per week, receive \$110,000 per year, free health insurance, and pension benefits, and allowing probate judges who lose their jobs through consolidation back into the system are inconsistent with providing cost savings. Permitting probate judges to practice law and to work in other probate courts only continues the conflicts of interest that are present in the existing system. Further, there is already acknowledgement that some probate districts created by the new legislation have a very large docket. The primary focus of a probate judge in these mega-districts and in all probate districts should be serving constituents and interested parties that come before them on a full-time basis without having the outside distractions, preoccupations, and conflicts of interest associated with operating a private practice.

The Probate Redistricting Commission was created by Substitute House Bill No. 6385, Public Act No. 09-114. According to Sections 22 (d) and (e) of PA 09-114, “The probate redistricting commission shall develop a plan for the consolidation of probate districts in accordance with the criteria set forth in subsection (a) of this section. Such plan shall include recommended amendments to sections 45a-2 to 45a-6k, inclusive, of the general statutes and other sections of the general statutes necessary to implement the plan.” Section 7 (h) requires that “a duly elected probate judge who works in such judge’s capacity as a probate judge at least twenty hours per week, on average, on a quarterly basis and certifies to that fact on forms provided by and filed with the Probate Court Administrator, on or before the fifteenth day of April, July, October and January, for the preceding calendar quarter.”

I recommend to this Commission that Section 7 (h) be amended as follows: “a duly elected probate judge who works in such judge’s capacity as a probate judge forty hours per week, on average, on a quarterly basis and certifies to that fact on forms provided by and filed with the Probate Court Administrator, on or before the fifteenth day of April, July, October and January, for the preceding calendar quarter; and such judge shall be prohibited from the practice of law.” I believe this amendment is necessary to implement the probate court redistricting plan the Commission is required to present to the House of Representatives, Senate, and Governor.

In testimony before the Connecticut Legislative Committee on Program Review and Investigations on October 7, 2005, Professor John H. Langbein, Sterling Professor of Law and Legal History at Yale Law School argued:

Fortunately, many of our probate judges are legally trained. Unfortunately, most of those are part-timers who practice law when they are not serving as judges. The result is rampant conflict-of-interest.... If you are the probate judge in Bethany on Monday and I am the probate judge in Woodbridge on Tuesday, and we each practice law before each other, or our partners practice there, abuse is invited. I am reluctant to rule against you or your partner,

because I know that you could rule unfavorably against the case that my partner or I am handling before you. The danger of favoritism in such circumstances is ever present.

The solution is obvious. Judges should be required to be full-time officers of justice, legally trained, but forbidden to practice law or to be partners in law firms. We do not need 123 full-time probate judges. Thus, achieving proper professionalization of our probate courts is intimately connected to reducing the number of these courts.” (Excerpt from *The Scandal of the Connecticut Probate Courts*).

PA 09-114 reduces the number of courts and requires all probate judges to be attorneys. Consideration should be given to taking the next step and prohibiting judges from any private law practice. If this Commission is uncomfortable prohibiting all private practice, then, at a minimum, consideration should be given to prohibiting all probate judges and their law firms from practicing law in all probate courts. This amendment to section 7 (h) would be as follows: “a duly elected probate judge who works in such judge’s capacity as a probate judge forty hours per week, on average, on a quarterly basis and certifies to that fact on forms provided by and filed with the Probate Court Administrator, on or before the fifteenth day of April, July, October and January, for the preceding calendar quarter; and such judge and the judge’s law firm shall be prohibited from the practice of law in any probate court.”

Presently, judges who are attorneys are prohibited from contested cases. I urge that this prohibition be extended to all probate practice. With the substantial salary increase most judges will receive under the new legislation, economic hardship is no longer a viable reason to allow non-contested probate practice. It is imperative that both judges and their law firms be prohibited from any probate practice if re-establishing the public’s view of the probate court system is going to happen.

When judges or their law firms practice law in other probate courts, the lay parties and the general public observe the dangerous appearance of “favoritism” as well as the conflict of interest described by Professor Langbein. It is insufficient to prohibit a judge from probate practice; other attorneys in the judge’s law firm must also be excluded if this probate reform is to have any chance of restoring public confidence in the probate courts.

With respect to the Probate Assembly Redistricting Plan and the Probate Redistricting Commission public hearing testimony summary, I propose the following:

Region 1

I support the creation of the Litchfield Hills District of Salisbury, Sharon, North Canaan, Canaan, Cornwall, Morris, Litchfield, Harwington, Norfolk, and Thomaston which will produce a population of 39,165 and WWL of 3,229.

I support the creation of the Torrington District of Colebrook, Winchester, Barkhamsted, New Hartford, Torrington, and Goshen which will produce a population of 61,297 and WWL of 4,615.

I support Kent and Warren joining the New Milford District which will produce a population of 69,282 and WWL of 3,210.

Region 2

I do not support the establishment of two new districts in the Farmington Valley because support for the Probate Assembly's plan is twice the amount of support for the proposed change, according to the Probate Redistricting Commission public hearing testimony summary.

Region 3

I do not support combining twelve towns that comprise the Northeast CT Council of Governments (NECCOG) into one district because it will leave the Windham District with a population of 30,049 and WWL of 2,072, both of which violate the population and WWL statutory requirement.

I do not support moving Plainfield and Sterling into the Northeast 2 District and moving Ashford, Eastford, and Union into the Windham District because NECCOG and Union, Eastford, and Ashford town officials do not support this plan.

Region 4

I do not support the establishment of a new district of Newtown, Bethel, and Brookfield because it will leave the Ridgefield and Redding District with a population of 32,712 and WWL of 1,613, both of which violate the population and WWL statutory requirement.

Region 5

I do not support the establishment of a new district of Bethany, Cheshire, and Prospect because of lack of consensus for the change amongst town officials. Support for this new district comes from a single source, the Cheshire Town Council Chair. However, the First Selectwoman of Bethany supports merging Bethany with Hamden.

I do not support the establishment of a new district of Bethany, Cheshire, Orange, Prospect, and Woodbridge because of lack of consensus for the change amongst town officials. The First Selectman of Orange opposes the inclusion of Cheshire. The First Selectman of Woodbridge supports a district of Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge to create the Amity Probate District. The First Selectwoman of Bethany supports merging Bethany with Hamden. The Cheshire Town Council Chair supports a district of Bethany, Cheshire, and Prospect.

I support the removal of Bethany from the Naugatuck District and placement of Bethany with Hamden. This will result in a Hamden-Bethany District with a population of 63,264 and WWL of 4,190. The Naugatuck District, in the absence of Bethany, has a population

of 59,501 and WWL of 2,977. The Hamden-Bethany District was proposed by Bethany First Selectwoman, Derrylyn Gorski.

Region 6

I support shifting Clinton into the Saybrook District and removing East Haddam from District 6B. Support for this change comes from the First Selectmen of Killingworth, Chester, Lyme, Clinton, Deep River, Old Saybrook, Essex, Westbrook, Haddam, Guilford, and Madison. It should be noted that the First Selectman of East Haddam does not support the removal of East Haddam from District 6B, but added his willingness to merge into a Colchester based court.

I do not support the establishment of a new district of Portland, East Hampton, East Haddam, Colchester, and Lebanon because support for the change comes from a single source, the Portland First Selectwoman.

Region 7

I do not support the establishment of a new district of Colchester, Lebanon, East Haddam, Bozrah, and Salem because it will leave the Colchester District with a population of 38,247 and WWL of 2,340, both of which violate the population and WWL statutory requirement.

Region 8

I do not support the establishment of a new district of Darien and New Canaan because it will leave the Westport District with a population of 36,708 and WWL of 2,210, both of which violate the population and WWL statutory requirement.

The Probate District of Westport, which consists of Darien, New Canaan, Weston, and Westport, is made up of noncontiguous territory. The Constitution and statutes require districts of elected officials and other organizations and institutions to be made up of contiguous territory in many cases, including senatorial districts, assembly districts, fire, water, and taxing districts, regional planning agencies, charter schools, etc. The Office of the Secretary of State was contacted for an opinion regarding whether probate court districts need to be made up of contiguous territory. Lesley Mara, Deputy Secretary of State, indicated that there seems to be nothing that would prohibit the creation of a probate court district consisting of noncontiguous territory. However, she emphasized that her office is the arbiter of election laws and, as such, consideration may be given to obtaining a formal opinion about this matter from the Attorney General's office.

I support the establishment of a new district of Norwalk and Westport which will produce a population of 137,879 and WWL of 7,027. This district was proposed by Walter Briggs, former chairman of the Norwalk Planning Commission.

I support the establishment of a new district of New Canaan, Darien, Wilton, and Weston which will produce a population of 68,051 and WWL of 4,456. This district was proposed by Walter Briggs, former chairman of the Norwalk Planning Commission.

I received the most phone calls and e-mails about the district of Shelton. The correspondence received indicates that Shelton Probate Court is separated from Derby Probate Court by a bridge. Given that there is less than a mile separating the two courts, it has been repeatedly proposed to merge the Shelton Probate District (population of 40,011 WWL 2,901) with the Derby Probate District (population of 56,425 WWL 3,684). The Shelton-Derby District will have a population of 96,436 and WWL of 6,585. I support the merging of the Shelton Probate District with the Derby Probate District. Alternatively, I support the merging of the Shelton Probate District with the Stratford District (population of 49,015 WWL 4,017). The Shelton-Stratford District will have a population of 89,026 and WWL of 6,918.

Region 9

I do not support the establishment of a new district of Bethany, Woodbridge, and Orange to create the Amity Probate District because it will leave the Amity District with a population of 28,580 and WWL of 2,274, both of which violate the population and WWL statutory requirement.

I appreciate your distribution of my comments to the rest of the Commissioners. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Murphy

Michael Christ

After reviewing the testimony, I believe there are a number of relatively small changes that should be made to the Probate Assembly's plan, two areas (the Northwest and Northeast) where towns should be reconfigured, and two areas where the case was made for new districts. As a result, if the Commission were to concur with the two additions, two districts would need to be eliminated. On the plan I will describe below, I have eliminated a district by combining the Vernon-Ellington district, one of the smallest in the state, with the Enfield-Somers-Stafford district, and by combining another of the smallest districts in the Probate Assembly plan, the Branford-North Branford district, with Madison and Guilford.

I suggest that the following 32 districts remain exactly as they are in the Assembly plan (they are listed in order of population with the district names from the Probate Assembly 50 Court Proposal table): Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, Norwalk, Berlin, Groton, Danbury, Region 4 South, Westport, Newington, Southington, Manchester, Milford, Norwich, Windsor, New Milford, Greenwich, Trumbull, West Hartford,

Meriden, Mansfield, Fairfield, Derby, West Haven, North Haven, East Lyme, Stratford, East Hartford, New London, Wallingford and Shelton.

The proposed changes are as follows:

- Add Plainfield, Canterbury and Sterling to the existing NE2 district of Union, Woodstock, Thompson, Putnam, Killingly, Brooklyn, Pomfret, Eastford and Ashford.
- The Windham district is then too small. I suggest adding Colchester and Lebanon to the remaining Windham district towns of Windham, Chaplin, Hampton and Scotland, increasing the size of the district and addressing the problem in the testimony of the distance between these two towns and Glastonbury in the original plan.
- The existing four town Middletown district was one of the larger and busier in the state, before the Assembly plan added Portland and East Hampton to it. I believe those towns made a case for staying east of the CT River in a district of similar communities, and suggest a four town district of Portland, East Hampton, East Haddam and Marlborough. I'll note that this is the one district in my proposal which is below the population and weighted workload standards. I believe this district is justified under all three exception criteria in the public act, geographic accessibility to residents of the district, availability of suitable municipal facilities to house the court (in East Hampton, which directly borders the other three towns), and communities of interest among the town's districts.
- The Middletown district would therefore include Middletown, Durham, Cromwell and Middlefield, the exact four towns that currently comprise that district.
- As a result of the changes above, the Glastonbury district would include the towns of Glastonbury and Hebron.
- As aforementioned, I suggest adding Vernon and Ellington to the proposed Enfield-Somers-Stafford district.
- I suggest retaining most of the Region 6B Saybrook area district. The only changes would be to add Clinton and subtract East Haddam, which I included with Portland, East Hampton and Marlborough above.
- Once Clinton is removed from the Madison-Guilford district, it is relatively small, as is its neighbor Branford-North Branford. I propose combining these four towns into one district.
- I suggest adding Bethany to the Hamden district in accordance with the expressed interest of that town to combine with Hamden if an Amity district is not created. While I am sympathetic to the desire of the Amity towns to have their own district, I do not believe that can be accommodated within a 50 district plan.
- I understand that there is interest in the Southbury region in adding Oxford to the Southbury district. Oxford and Southbury have close ties, and so I suggest making that one change to the Assembly's proposed six town Southbury district.
- With Bethany and Oxford now removed from the Naugatuck district, I suggest adding Middlebury to that district to partially compensate. Middlebury is now part of the three town Waterbury district, which is one of the largest in the state,

and so I believe it makes more sense to add Middlebury to Naugatuck, Beacon Falls and Prospect.

- The Waterbury district would then be comprised of Waterbury and Wolcott, with the only small change being the removal of Middlebury.
- I believe a very persuasive case was made to separate the Farmington Valley towns into two districts. I propose a district of Farmington, Burlington and Plainville to address this. While I understand that there was testimony from Plainville about preferring to be combined with Bristol, the Bristol-Plymouth district is already very large, and I believe Plainville, Farmington and Burlington would be an effective, working district.
- There was extensive testimony concerning retaining a district that includes Bloomfield, East Granby, Granby, Suffield and Windsor Locks, and I support that. I suggest only one change. Hartland, a very small town, is a considerable distance from the likely court locations in a Bloomfield-Suffield area district, especially for the residents of Hartland who live west of the reservoir. I would remove Hartland from the Bloomfield-Suffield district.
- With Plainville being part of a district with Farmington, the Bristol district would include the towns of Bristol and Plymouth.
- I am persuaded by the extensive testimony from residents of towns in Northwest CT that the Litchfield Hills district should be created. This district would include Norfolk, North Canaan, Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon, Cornwall, Kent, Warren, Litchfield, Morris, Harwinton and Thomaston.
- As a result of the changes above, the three towns of Avon, Simsbury and Canton would be part of a district. I suggest adding New Hartford, Barkhamsted and Hartland to that district. New Hartford and Barkhamsted are part of the Route 44 corridor with these three Farmington Valley towns, and it would be more convenient for Hartland residents to be part of this district than to be part of one centered further east. This would also keep the existing New Hartford Probate district of New Hartford, Barkhamsted and Hartland together.
- There therefore would be a probate district of Torrington, Winchester, Colebrook and Goshen, combining two existing two town Probate districts.

I thank the Commission members for their consideration of this proposal.

Please consider this an addendum to the plan that I submitted earlier this week providing suggested revisions to the Probate Assembly's plan.

To aid in understanding those revisions I have done a comparison of my suggested plan (including population and weighted workload statistics) to that proposed by the Probate Assembly (see attached).

I have suggested a plan that will consolidate some of the proposed smaller courts and provide a total of 47 courts, while taking into consideration many but not all of the concerns relayed at the public hearing and the related correspondence.

The content of the plan keeps about half of the courts exactly the way they were proposed in the Assembly plan and suggests minor changes to several others. Three new court configurations have been added and some fairly significant changes have been made to a few.

The proposed changes are as follows:

- I will begin by addressing the only non-contiguous district in the Plan. I recommend merging Darien with the Norwalk district and including Ridgefield with Wilton, Westport and New Canaan. Weston would then be merged with Easton, Monroe and Trumbull.
- I suggest merging Shelton with Stratford (two of the smaller courts) to create a district with a more equitable population distribution and weighted workload.
- The same reasoning applies for merging Wallingford with Branford and North Branford.
- East Hartford is another district with a smaller population and weighted workload that could easily be combined with South Windsor and East Windsor.
- As a result of this combination it would be logical to combine Ellington, Vernon, Tolland, Willington and Ashford in that Ellington/Vernon has a relatively small population and weighted workload.
- This would allow for the creation of a district including Eastford, Woodstock, Thompson, Pomfret, Putnam, Brooklyn, Killingly, Canterbury, Plainfield and Sterling.
- As a result, Coventry, Mansfield, Chaplin, Hampton, Windham and Scotland would be a logical combination.
- There was a good deal of testimony regarding the creation of a district including Lebanon, Colchester, East Haddam, Salem and Bozrah. This district had the support of numerous judges and elected officials. I support that recommendation.
- A logical neighboring district would be the towns of Lyme, Old Lyme, East Lyme and Montville.
- Chester, Deep River, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Old Saybrook and Westbrook were already a part of the Region 6B Saybrook area district and have sufficient population and weighted workload to remain a separate and distinct district.

- Portland has expressed a desire to be included in the Glastonbury, East Hampton, Marlborough and Hebron district. Removing them from the already busy Middletown district would be advantageous.
- A logical bordering district to the Glastonbury and Colchester/Lebanon areas would be Manchester, Bolton, Andover and Columbia. This was also the Probate Assembly's plan.
- While I am sympathetic to the concerns of the Town of Farmington, I believe the town of Plainville should be included in the Bristol, Plainville and Plymouth district as recommended by the Probate Assembly and as supported by testimony from the Town Manager of Plainville and the Bristol and Plainville Probate Court judges. West Hartford is contiguous to Farmington in a fairly compact area of the state. I believe they are better suited to be combined with West Hartford rather than Avon, Canton and Simsbury.
- Avon, Canton and Simsbury all border Bloomfield and would be a logical addition to that district.
- The above mentioned combination would allow for a district of Granby, East Granby, Suffield, and Windsor Locks.
- While there was a great deal of testimony from the Litchfield Hills section of the state, I believe that there should be a new district of Sharon, Kent, Cornwall, Warren, Litchfield, Morris, Thomaston, Harwinton, Burlington and Washington.
- The above mentioned district would allow for a district with Salisbury, North Canaan, Canaan, Norfolk, Goshen, Colebrook, Winchester, Torrington, Hartland, Barkhamsted and New Hartford to the north. This would also keep the existing New Hartford Probate district of New Hartford, Barkhamsted and Hartland together.
- To the south of the revised Litchfield District I would propose keeping the Southbury district recommended by the Probate Assembly with the exception of Washington.

I look forward to meeting with the members of the Commission to arrive at a configuration that would best support the needs of the citizens of the state. Unfortunately there are many conflicting proposals and we will be unable to satisfy all who took the time to share their thoughts with us.

I do believe that in order to successfully complete the task ahead of us we need to take the time to consider all views even those that conflict with the Probate Assembly Plan.

Thank you for taking the time to review the data that I have prepared.

*Ann Follacchio's
Proposed Redistricting Plan
compared to Probate Assembly's Proposal*

<u>District #</u>	<u>Towns</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>WWL</u>	<u>POP</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>WWL</u>
1	Bridgeport	136,695	8897	136,695	8897
2	Middlebury Waterbury Wolcott	7,146 107,455 16,300	9858	130,901	9858
3	Hartford	124,563	11349	124,563	11349
4	New Haven	123,932	12709	123,932	12709
5	Stamford	118,475	6463	118,475	6463
6	<i>Darien</i> Norwalk Wilton	20,246 101,171 (See Westport district 14)	1152 4817	121,417	5969
7	Cromwell Durham Middlefield Middletown East Hampton Portland	13,540 7,358 4,276 47,528 (See Glastonbury district 16) (See Colchester/Lebanon district)	6269	72,702	6269
8	Berlin New Britain	90,918	6521	90,918	6521
9	Bristol Plainville Plymouth	60,911 17,193 12,011	5149 1316 713	90,115	7178
10	Avon Canton Simsbury <i>Bloomfield</i> Burlington Farmington	17,333 10,086 23,559 20,693 (See Litchfield district 50) (See West Hartford district 31)	1011 606 1128 1856	71,671	4601

11	Groton	42,234	2525	80,886	4987
	Ledyard	15,097	626		
	N. Stonington	5,212	292		
	Stonington	18,343	1544		
12	Danbury	79,226	4296	79,226	4296
13	Bethel	18,514	825	54,144	2842
	Redding	8,840	671		
	Newtown	26,790	1346		
	Ridgefield	(See Westport district 14)			
14	New Canaan	19,890	1680	70,404	4832
	<i>Wilton</i>				
	<i>Ridgefield</i>	23,872	942		
	Westport	26,642	2210		
	Darien	(See Norwalk district 6)			
	Weston	(See Trumbull district 29)			
15	Newington	29,586	5947	74,478	5947
	Rocky Hill	18,835			
	Wethersfield	26,057			
16	Hebron	9,232	382	58,289	2985
	Glastonbury	33,169	1647		
	Marlborough	6,351	315		
	<i>Portland</i>	9,537	641		
	Colchester	(See new Colchester/Lebanon district)			
	Lebanon	(See new Colchester/Lebanon district)			
17	Southington	42,142	2837	80,308	4841
	Cheshire	28,884	2004		
	<i>Prospect</i>	9,282			
18	Andover	3,211	648	69,580	4058
	Bolton	5,142			
	Columbia	5,370			
	Manchester	55,857	3410		
19	Orange	13,813	1052	69,258	4891
	Milford	55,445	3839		
20	Enfield	45,011	2559	68,398	3882
	Somers				
	Stafford	23,387	1323		
	<i>Union</i>				

21 (New)	Barkhamsted	3,708		74,259	5593
	Canaan	1,103	110		
	Colebrook	1,546			
	Goshen	3,154			
	Hartland	2,090			
	New Hartford	6,794	558		
	Norfolk	1,678	167		
	North Canaan	3,338	339		
	Salisbury	4,047	404		
	Torrington	35,931	3124		
	Winchester	10,870	891		
22	Franklin	1,896		64,371	4347
	Griswold	11,390	610		
	Lisbon	4,188			
	Preston	4,894			
	Norwich	36,408	3737		
	Sprague	2,986			
	Voluntown	2,609			
	Bozrah	(See new Colchester/Lebanon district)			
23	Granby	11,187	652	72,641	4127
	East Granby	5,082			
	Suffield	15,127	870		
	Windsor	28,754	1821		
	Windsor Locks	12,491	784		
	Bloomfield	(See Canton district 10)			
	Hartland	(See new Torrington district 21)			
24	East Hartford	48,697	3295	85,290	5249
	East Windsor	10,563	1954		
	South Windsor	26,030			
	Windsor	(See district 23)			
25	Oxford	12,537	532	55,747	2815
	Naugatuck	31,933	1964		
	Beacon Falls	5,711			
	Bethany	5,566	319		
	Prospect	(See Southington district 17)			
26	Bridgewater			65,130	2825
	Brookfield	16,413	877		
	New Fairfield	14,248	647		
	New Milford	30,323	1301		
	Sherman	4,146			

27	Brooklyn	7,866	785	82,454	5874
	Canterbury	5,102			
	Eastford	1,790	225		
	Killingly	17,710	1332		
	Plainfield	15,453	1171		
	Pomfret	4,165	263		
	Putnam	9,292	1006		
	Sterling	3,657			
	Thompson	9,231	762		
	Woodstock	8,188	330		
	Ashford	(See Ellington district 47)			
	Union	(See Enfield district 20)			
28	Greenwich	61,871	4757	61,871	4757
29	Easton	7,272	3337	71,032	3337
	Monroe	19,247			
	Trumbull	34,243			
	Weston	10,270			
30	Bethlehem	3,580		57,689	4881
	Roxbury	2,319	220		
	Southbury	19,678	2740		
	Watertown	22,347			
	Woodbury	9,765	1921		
	Washington	(See new Litchfield district 50)			
31	Farmington	25,084	2068	85,570	9360
	West Hartford	60,486	7292		
32	Meriden	59,225	4590	59,225	4590
33	Chaplin			64,646	3441
	Coventry	12,215			
	Hampton	2,118	93		
	Mansfield	24,779	1502		
	Scotland	1,724			
	Windham	23,810	1846		
	Tolland	(See Ellington District 47)			
	Willington	(See Ellington District 47)			
34	Hamden	57,698	3871	57,698	3871

35	Chester	3,384	444	46,210	4126
	Deep River	4,673	436		
	Essex	6,753	883		
	Haddam	7,800	341		
	Killingworth	6,443	382		
	Old Saybrook	10,539	1032		
	Westbrook	6,618	608		
	East Haddam	(See new Colchester district)			
Lyme	(See East Lyme district 32)				
36	Fairfield	57,548	4464	57,548	4464
37	Ansonia	18,650		56,581	3684
	Derby	12,481	2781		
	Seymour	16,249			
	Woodbridge	9,201	903		
38	Clinton	13,578	847	54,744	3079
	Guilford	22,373	1082		
	Madison	18,793	1150		
39	See district 27 and 33.				
40	West Haven	52,676	6144	52,676	6144
41	North Haven	24,077	1752	52,818	4090
	East Haven	28,741	2338		
42	Lyme	2,076	207	47,895	2954
	East Lyme	18,690	1131		
	Montville	19,744	906		
	Old Lyme	7,385	710		
43	Stratford	49,015	4017	89,026	6918
	Shelton	40,011	2901		
44	See District 24.				
45	New London	25,979	5713	44,788	5713
	Waterford	18,809			
46	Wallingford	44,679	3741	88,069	6902
	Branford	28,984	2197		
	North Branford	14,406	964		

47	<i>Ashford</i>	4,453	305	69,399	4581
	Ellington	14,370	3208		
	<i>Tolland</i>	14,699	1068		
	Vernon	29,672			
	<i>Willington</i>	6,205			
48	See district 46.				
49	See district 43.				
New	Burlington	9,143	319	46,412	3471
	Cornwall	1,489	149		
	Harwinton	5,600	393		
	Kent	2,970			
	Litchfield	8,750	1393		
	Morris	2,381			
	Sharon	3,058	305		
	Thomaston	7,932	371		
	Warren	1,385			
	Washington	3,704	541		
New	Bozrah	2,444	207	58,114	2780
	Colchester	22,859	1351		
	East Hampton	12,548	440		
	East Haddam	8,852	531		
	Salem	4,102	251		
	Lebanon	7,319			