

**Knierim, Paul J.**

**From:** Linda Neal [373lighthouse@att.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 16, 2010 4:55 PM  
**To:** Knierim, Paul J.; judgedianne@aol.com; jmarino@recol.net  
**Subject:** Letter to the Budget Committee

February 16, 2010

To the members of the State of Connecticut Probate Court Budget Committee:

I am very much aware of the financial constraints and concerns that Probate Administration is dealing with during this time of economic uncertainty and budgetary crisis. The task before you is an extremely difficult one. I do not know that I, personally, will be impacted by the changes that will occur following the transition in January 2011. However, I am concerned enough to write a note to you about these changes and the potentially negative impact to our probate system.

Morale among the clerks is quite low and there is an atmosphere of mistrust and uncertainty among many of them. There are several issues causing this, but one of them is the potential reduction of benefits, whether salary or otherwise, as a result of the changes that are to occur. The hope is that existing clerks could be kept at their current level of salary and benefits if they exceed what the committee will implement next year. Further, even though the Probate Court staff is not by statute considered part of the "judicial system", I believe that the work we do merits a salary and benefits package comparable to those employed by the State of Connecticut Judicial Department.

It would obviously be a bad situation if there were an exodus of clerks during this time of significant change. I understand that there will always be losses during any consolidation or downsizing, but I hope the system will retain many of its experienced clerks. However, the better, more knowledgeable clerks may be the ones who leave if they are not properly compensated, simply because they can command better benefits and salary in the private sector.

I am certain that you have already given these issues much thought, but I wanted to add my voice for your consideration.

Linda A. Neal, clerk

Colchester Probate Court

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