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March 1, 2021

The Honorable Catherine Osten
The Honorable Toni Walker
Co-Chairs, Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

HB 6439: Funding for Legal/Legislative Materials, Connecticut State Library

Dear Senator Osten and Representative Walker:

I am writing to you to support funding for the Connecticut State Library. I have been representing indigent defendants on appeal in Connecticut and Massachusetts for twenty years.

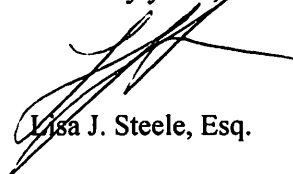
In any year, the State Library and the Superior Court Law Libraries are irreplaceable resources, particularly for legislative history and legal materials. The recent decision in *State v. Gomes*, SC 20407 (Slip Op. 1/26/21), for example, would have been very different had I not been able to obtain from the State Library copies of the microfiched briefs in the four underlying cases to see exactly what had been previously argued to the Supreme Court and Appellate Court about the jury instruction at issue in that case and to show the Court how the jury instruction in my case differed from those in the earlier cases.

A year ago, the libraries were forced to close to the public. At that time, I was in the midst of preparing two cases for oral argument to the Supreme Court, and working on briefs in both the Supreme and Appellate Courts. Over the course of the past year, the State Library has provided invaluable help with legislative history, copies of past appellate briefs (to see how issues have been raised for purposes of briefing and argument), portions of evidentiary treatises and older jury instructions, and other legal materials. All of these materials were vital to two Supreme Court arguments, an Appellate Court argument, six Supreme Court briefs, and two Appellate Court briefs. The Library has provided a vital link in the effective representation of indigent defendants in Connecticut which could not have been provided by other sources.

I ask you to support fully funding the library's budget for its staff and legal and legislative materials.

If you have any questions, please write or call me.

Sincerely yours,



Lisa J. Steele, Esq.