



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

CHAMBERS OF
ELIZABETH A. BOZZUTO
CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

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**Testimony of Judge Elizabeth A. Bozzuto
Chief Court Administrator for the Judicial Branch
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
General Obligation Bonding Subcommittee Agency Presentation
March 15, 2023**

Good afternoon, Senator Moore, Representative Napoli, Senator Hwang, Representative Piscopo and members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee General Obligation Bonding Subcommittee. My name is Elizabeth Bozzuto and I am the Chief Court Administrator for the Judicial Branch.

The Judicial Branch's need for bond funding is for three primary purposes:

1. Infrastructure repairs to courthouses statewide, including necessary improvements and alterations to comply with the ADA;
2. Security Improvements; and
3. Technology or more specifically, implementation of the Technology Strategic Plan.

The Judicial Branch's biennium capital budget request is \$15,000,000 for FY 2024 and \$15,000,000 for FY 2025. Following the Governor's directive to examine projects that could be budgeted and completed within the next biennium utilizing previous and future authorizations, this capital request is an accurate representation of this objective.

1. Our Courthouses:

The Judicial Branch owns 38 courthouses of varying age and square footage. Of the 38, only four were constructed in this century; 12 were constructed prior to 1950, with New London having the oldest courthouse built in 1784. Between the end-of-life cycle of the

various mechanical systems and building facades and the heavy use of the courthouses on a daily basis – nearly 3 million people screened annually – the Judicial Branch is constantly working within its means to proactively replace mechanicals and building envelope systems, while also responding to emergency or unplanned repairs and new code compliance.

The availability of bond funds allows us to keep the court system up and running in a safe and accessible manner. We are in the close out phase of the Fairfield Judicial District Roof Replacement, Middletown Elevator Modernizations, Tolland Judicial District Parking Lot Improvements, and the Supreme Court Partial Roof Replacement.

Projects that are in the bidding phase include Meriden roof replacement, Bridgeport Geographical Area (GA) courthouse sidewalk replacement, Middletown façade repairs, New London GA roof gable replacement, and New London Judicial District Plaza repairs. The Department of Administrative Services' Division of Construction Services anticipates bidding the Hartford GA Garage Renovation project this spring.

Projects that are currently in the design phase are the Waterbury GA garage renovation project, Appellate Court storefront replacement, New Haven Judicial District chiller replacement, Hartford GA modernizations to four public elevators, and a statewide building automation system study.

Further, the Judicial Branch relies on bond funds to provide to buildings that are ADA-compliant, to serve judges, staff, attorneys, litigants, and the public. By this fall, ADA checklist assessments will have been completed in all courthouses, with recommendations. Once there is a complete picture and an action plan created, we anticipate requesting ADA bond funding to bring the buildings up to the current ADA code requirements.

2. Security:

Physical security of courthouses remains a top priority of the Judicial Branch. During the pandemic, a command center was constructed in the Judicial Marshal Services offices. This command center allows for a group of highly trained marshals to observe 869 cameras in statewide locations. With the assistance of security bond funding, we have been able to upgrade and expand CCTV systems throughout the state, an effort that remains ongoing. At the GA Court in Bridgeport, the public enter and exit through one set of doors in a very confined lobby. Design is currently underway to create a separate entrance and weapons screening area creating a safer space for the public, attorneys, and Judicial Marshal staff.

3. Technology:

As we learned during the height of the pandemic and in the time that followed, we have become more and more reliant on remote technology to serve the public, attorneys, employees, and others better and more efficiently. We are continuing to enhance virtual court technology to enhance the public's access to the courts. In the coming months, we will begin the rollout of a video remote interpreting system. This system will allow for the courtroom proceeding to move forward with the presence of one of our staff interpreters providing the interpretation remotely.

The bond funding that we have requested will support the Judicial Branch's Technology Strategic Plan, which includes the upgrade of aging network and service equipment, storage, intrusion protection systems, expansion of systems and services such as those I noted above to various locations, and the replacement of obsolete telephone equipment.

We appreciate the support of the Legislature in meeting the Judicial Branch's capital funding needs.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have and have asked Executive Director of Administrative Services, Brian Hill; Executive Director of Information Systems, Lucio DeLuca; Director of Judicial Marshal Services, O'Donovan Murphy; and Director of Facilities, Laura Jovino to assist me in responding to your inquiries.