



**TESTIMONY
G.A.E. COMMITTEE
February 21, 2007**

Representative Caruso, Senator Slossberg, members of the committee. My name is Patrick Johnson and I am President of Oak Hill, the largest not for profit provider of community based care for people with disabilities in 110 sites in 58 towns in CT. I am also a member of the Non Profit Cabinet and a member of the Board of The Connecticut Community Providers Association.

I am here this afternoon to testify against Raised Bill No. 7147, An Act Concerning Comprehensive Reform of the State Contracting Process. I want to simply advise you that there are unintended consequences to such legislation. Last year due to overly aggressive ethics legislation the University of CT lost millions of dollars in corporate scholarship support. If Bill 7147 were to pass private non-profit agencies could find that our clients are deprived of psychiatric services, dental services and other essential medical care including nursing staff from nursing pools. Buildings and grounds could become more neglected than they are at group homes. Private non profit organizations would be put in a position of collecting confidential information from medical practices groups, nursing pools, landscape firms, and perhaps plumbers and electricians called to service our clients and properties. Will automobile dealers who have just bid on a contract to lease and maintain our vans want to now share confidential business information for the public record that is then available to their competitors for future bidding? There is hardly a dentist in CT who will accept any more Medicaid patients. We are constantly forced to use nursing pools because we can't hire enough nursing staff to serve people with severe developmental and intellectual disabilities. The mission of Oak Hill is to provide the best quality of life we can for those we serve with limited resources. This bill appears designed to sabotage that mission.

In addition, any time and scarce resources that non-profit agencies have to spend creating duplicative reports in yet another format to provide information we already provide will result in a reduction in vital service.

In fact to an outsider it would appear that the administration and public policy makers are attempting to put non-profit agencies out of business. We have been under funded for over 20 years with an average annual COLA of 1.4%, well below the CPI. State employees doing the same job receive over 40% more in wages and thus the state constantly hires away our best and brightest. We are under a constant microscope of audits and reporting. Each state agency demands information in different formats, different frequencies, and different time frames. Now with federal waivers and dollars following clients we will be required to account for our services by the hour in unprecedented levels of detail and with no assistance to hire the additional administrative staff to make all this work. Oak Hill presently has a multi-million dollar deficit. We believe in accountability but bill 7147 goes beyond accountability into what some might term harassment at worst and unreasonable demands at best. There is not one state contract that we have that we do not have to subsidize. We are being slowly strangled to death by under funding and now the governor has zero increases for my agency for the next two years and Bill 7147 seems designed to drive away our doctors and nurses and vital services for our clients. I know you all get to ask the questions but I have just one to respectfully ask. Why is the state of CT moving at every level to put private community providers out of business??? Please think carefully about the unintended consequences of bill 7147 and work with us to assure ethical contracting.

Respectfully submitted,
Patrick J. Johnson Jr.
President of Oak Hill (a.k.a., The Connecticut
Institute for the Blind Inc.)