



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Human Services Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
Thursday, February 22, 2007

RANKING MEMBER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Dear Senator Harris, Senator Kissel, Senator Coleman, Representative Villano, Representative Gibbons, Representative Abercrombie and Human Services Committee Membership:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 6892, *AN ACT CONCERNING RELOCATION OF A MEDICAID CERTIFIED NURSING HOME*. This legislation was modeled on the desire of the Jewish Home in Fairfield to relocate to Monroe and is designed to improve services offered to our senior population, while reducing the number of Medicaid beds.

Over the next few years the strain placed on Connecticut's Healthcare system will be tremendous. The demand for healthcare services is rapidly increasing as baby boomers retire and our population ages. This demand will come at an increasingly high cost and it is prudent that we develop strategies to confront this problem. One solution that has presented itself is to allow the Jewish Home in Fairfield to relocate to Monroe. Under the current moratorium on nursing homes, statutes §§17b-352 and 17b-353, such a move is prohibited. I am asking this Committee to support HB 6892 which would grant an exception.

The current moratorium on nursing homes was enacted over 10 years ago to decrease the overall number of beds, while ensuring that seniors had sufficient access to a high level of care. Although the idea behind this moratorium is sound, in practice it is preventing the State from improving the quality of care to seniors and their access to. Under the proposed move, the Jewish home will go from serving just 360 residents to over 700; the decrease of roughly 1% of available beds in Fairfield will have limited impact on an area that only has an occupancy rate of 94%.

And yet, the benefits of this move aren't just restricted to the increase in care that will be offered. Significant fiscal benefits will be realized both locally and at the state level. An increase in the number of residents served will necessitate an increase in the number of employees hired. Local business will also prosper as more residents in the area will lead to an increase in economic activity. Even the State will benefit from this move with an average savings of over \$6 million dollars in Medicaid funds.

I thank the Committee for raising this important bill and ask that it please be given a favorable report.