TESTIMONY BEFORE GENERAL ASSEMBLY' S PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
CONCERNING RAISED BILLS:

HB 7156 "AN ACT CONCERNING HOSPICE SERVICES"

HB 7193 "AN ACT CONCERNING A WAIVER FROM STATE LICENSING REGULATIONS FOR HOSPICE-ONLY PROVIDERS'

BY

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To members of the Public Health Committee:

I am here today representing the interests and concerns of The Connecticut Hospice, the Nation's 1st provider of hospice and palliative services. I say to you for the record that we enthusiastically **support HB 7156** and vigorously **oppose HB 7193**.

The bills before you are mutually exclusive in that 7156 reinforces the quality standards our state is known for while the other bill, 7193, would set aside these standards.

Bill 7156 reaffirms the wisdom of earlier legislators to protect the sanctity of hospice services by aligning them with the already well monitored and regulated home health agencies while bill 7193 would create a separate, reduced level of health care standards for hospice patients.

Bill 7156 reinforces a mission driven commitment to serve dying patients in all settings of the continuum from home to hospital to nursing home while bill 7193 would circumvent this commitment by ignoring Connecticut's long standing health code provisions including those which regulate coordination agreements between providers. It should be noted that in a number of states (California, Florida, Illinois, New York and Texas) that have hospice health care requirements less rigorous than Connecticut's, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services found numerous instances of error, fraud and abuse. During a two year period, nearly $83 million in fraudulent Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements was recovered and nearly 30 hospice programs were decertified. To my knowledge, Connecticut has never had such a case. I believe this is in large part due to Connecticut's stricter health care standards that place patient care over profits.

I ask you to move forward with HB 7156 but **not approve** HB 7193 and help us safeguard our elderly at the most critical times of their lives.