



State of Connecticut
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

March 4, 2008

Good morning Senators Harris and Kissel and Representatives Villano and Gibbons. The House Republican caucus appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony to the Human Services Committee today in support of ***SB 558, AN ACT CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY OF HOSPICE SERVICES UNDER THE MEDICAID PROGRAM.***

Availing Hospice services under the state's Medicaid program to those truly in need, is a priority of the legislature this session. The House Republicans and Governor Rell have submitted legislation providing this service under Medicaid.

Connecticut, along with Oklahoma and New Hampshire, are the only three remaining states that do not have a Medicaid Hospice benefit. We are grateful that the number of states not providing this vital coverage has gone down. Yet, at the same time we are very concerned that Connecticut may be the last hold out.

According to prior testimony before this committee, Hospice care agencies estimate that if our state added the Hospice benefit to Medicaid, Connecticut would save more than \$15.8 million in its annual Medicaid budget. As well, a report by the consulting firm Milliman Research Co. in 2003 found that if all states suspended hospice coverage, national Medicaid spending would increase by about \$282 million a year. Hospice provides a cost effective service family members can rely on.

It may be cliché to say, but we in the House Republicans want our loved ones to live their last months in dignity – surrounded by their loved ones, be it spouses, children or even pets. Hospice is a national model in palliative care to those suffering terminal illness and the House Republicans appreciate the Human Services Committee hearing testimony today on such an important issue.