

TESTIMONY

Speaker of the House

James A. Amann

Human Services Committee

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

10:00 A.M. in Room 2A of the LOB

Proposed H.B. No. 5072

**AN ACT CONCERNING APPROPRIATIONS TO IMPROVE
NURSE STAFFING RATIOS.**

Good morning, Representative Villano and Senator Harris. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to speak in regards to an issue that not only troubles me, but has upset the citizens of this state: the status of our nursing homes. Events this year regarding Haven Healthcare in New Haven opened the eyes of many to a breakdown in services and how we provide services to those who need them the most. When placing a loved one in the care of others, their safety and the quality of care should never come into question. It should be expected that they are left in the hands of professionals who take pride in what they do and have a genuine care for the individuals that they are providing services for. This is not the kind of issue that we can simply put a band aid over, call it a day and walk away. That is why I am here today, to support House Bill 5072, which will help to rehabilitate the system, make effective changes and provide peace of mind to those in care, their families and the citizens of Connecticut.

House Bill 5072 will address many of the major flaws that have been identified within nursing homes. The main problems that we have identified revolve around staffing. We currently measure staffing in our nursing homes on an hour per clients ratio in Connecticut. It is time that we moved to a different ratio, which would be a staff to patient ratio. If you have a loved one in a nursing home you should not be expected to observe the staff for 24 hours to make sure that your loved one has received their 1.9 hours of care every day. By having a staff to patient ratio, it will be visible that staffing minimums are met and that proper care is received. This will require that we increase the staffing numbers at nursing homes so that staffing minimums will be met. Nursing homes will be required to post what the staffing ratios should be, so that it is readily known to patients, staff and family members what the staffing numbers should be. This leads to the issue of transparency within the nursing home system. We need to be aware of who is doing business with the nursing homes and receiving Medicaid dollars. We need to assure that nursing homes are involved in good and ethical business practices. If we are going to be putting more money into the system, the transparency comes into play because we should be able to see where the money is going, and to assure that the money is going to staffing.