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TESTIMONY RE: SB No. 837 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS FEES

Finance Committee Hearing

February 23, 2009

Good Morning Senator Dailey, Representative Staples and members of the Finance Committee.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut. I am Dr. Mary Jane Williams, current chairperson of its Government Relations Committee and professor and chair of nursing at the University of Hartford. I have practiced nursing for over 40 years and have been educating nurses in Connecticut for 35 years. I am providing testimony in opposition of SB No. 837 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS FEES.

The Connecticut Nurses Association urges you to consider holding all licensing fees on Nurses licenses stable; this request includes Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Nurses and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses. Nursing license fees **doubled** in 2007.

For advanced practice registered nurses this meant doubling both their RN and their APRN licenses, as they are required to hold both licenses to practice. This was on top of significant increases that have also been levied for their DEA and DCP certifications needed to prescribe controlled drugs. These fees, coupled with the increases in their malpractice insurance that is also required by statute, puts a burden on the APRN whose wage is significantly less than other providers.

Connecticut 's RN license fee is double most area states. This increase has the potential of deterring individuals who hold dual licenses from renewing their license in Connecticut. Many of the boarder states have lower license fees and are more supportive of professionals in nursing. If a nurse can choose to practice in another state, we will not only lose the revenue but also the practitioner. Nurses, who also have maintained their license, even though they are not practicing and/or are retired, will also move to a "retired nurse" license, which is projected to be a third less then full licensure.

Connecticut is facing a severe nursing shortage and our members and colleagues believe that significantly raising fees again during this period of crisis is extremely inappropriate. Workforce issues will be severely aggravated by the loss of practitioners who are already financially challenged living in our state. The loss in revenue from this projected fee increase will not have the same impact as the loss of professional nurses in the workforce.

I urge you to **not top double nursing licensing fees** at this time. I recommend you examine expanding the Electronic Licensure System. License all health professionals electronically and biannually with a staggered system. This will maintain a constant influx of funds each year and it will also provide us with essential workforce information we need to predict workforce needs over the next decade.

Thank you,

Mary Jane Williams PhD, RN