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Written Testimony before the Human Services Committee
2.17.09

SB 346, AAC the Transfer of Social Service Program Administration to Community Providers

Good morning Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Committee. My name is Ron Cretaro and I am the Executive Director of Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CT Nonprofits), an association of more than 530 nonprofits across the state, 300 of whom receive state funding to provide health and human services on its behalf. Since its inception, the CT Nonprofits has been dedicated to advocating for individuals to live in the least restrictive environments in their community so they may enjoy the greatest degree of individual independence and self-sufficiency.

The legislation proposed seems to move us further in that direction as a state. Community based private provider organizations are an integral part of their local communities - they are members of the local chambers of commerce, employers of local residents, have local citizens serving as board members and general local support for their operations. By location, they are designed to respond proactively and efficiently to the needs of their communities.

Communities respond more cooperatively to local providers because they have a relationship with the directors and employees. Families and potential consumers are more apt to seek out services when they can walk down the block to speak to a real person or have made a connection because a friend or neighbor is employed by one of these local organizations.

While we agree that local administration of social services by private provider programs are effective, this legislation does not address the methodology used to transfer services. What happens to state positions? What dollars follow this transfer of service delivery? Our experience has been that efforts to convert public sector services to private provider programs have not yielded commensurate resources. We have frequently witnessed the chngcover from state to private without sufficient corresponding funding. We are concerned that the State's need to capture savings will be accomplished at the expense of individuals and programs transitioning from state to community based private providers. If services are to be transferred to private providers, sufficient dollars need to follow individuals into the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please free to contact me with any questions or concerns at rcretaro@ctnonprofits.org or (860) 525-5080.