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Good morning. Let me begin by introducing myself. My name is Monique Allard and I am here on behalf of my agency, Quality Homemakers, as well as representing the Connecticut Homemaker and Companion Association. CTHCA was formed several years ago in order to represent and serve the common interests of homemaker and companion agencies and the individuals they serve. We aim to set the standard in non-medical home care and we have nothing but our clients' best interests at heart.

Regarding Bill #5312 requiring agencies to use the State Police for background checks; this represents a financial as well as logistical burden to agencies like mine.

First of all it's expensive. Under this bill, it will cost me hundreds of dollars to perform State Police background checks just on the people who have already been working for me during the two year look back period. My company pays approximately \$100-thousand dollars on workers' comp and \$25-thousand dollars for commercial liability. Add the \$300 annual Homemaker/Companion registration fee, not to mention the business entity tax and there isn't much left. (And I have to do this while billing \$16.32 hourly for homemaking services and \$14.52 for companion services) In this economic climate I contend that to place additional financial burden on small businesses like ours is not in anyone's best interest. Furthermore, the State Police Criminal Records Data base is admittedly not always current to date.

By having unlimited access to my current background provider, I am able to check existing employees periodically. There would be no incentive for me or any other agency to do this if it's accompanied by a \$25 price tag. This is especially important for DMV records as a vast majority of my employees provide the only cost effective transportation for literally hundreds of clients to doctor's appointments, hearing assistance appointments, religious services, grocery, variety and drug stores, and simply getting them out of the house—something you and I take for granted.

Then there is the issue of timing. Often, my agency is given one or two days or even hours' notice when services are ordered for a client. Forcing us to wait two weeks or more before determining whether an applicant is "safe" will delay our ability to provide services for our needy clients. It simply isn't practical.

I am also concerned that this bill is targeting reputable agencies, while private individuals are not required to be screened. My contracts with the state department of social services, Connecticut Community Care, and Senior Resources already require me to adhere to strict standards.

Since our agencies became regulated two years ago, there has never been, to my knowledge, any data or evidence to support the idea that the background checks we currently perform are in any way inadequate. Frankly, Bill #5312 unfairly punishes the very people who are already providing safe, reliable service to the people you seek to protect.

Thank you