

Mongillo, Arthur

From: Toohey, Pam on behalf of Sen. Prague, Edith
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2010 11:43 AM
To: commcompanies@snet.net
Cc: Mongillo, Arthur
Subject: FW: Raised bills 5110, 5111, and 5112

Nancy Trawick-Smith ,

I will forward this to the Aging Committee to be submitted as written testimony.

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From: Nancy Trawick-Smith [mailto:commcompanies@snet.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2010 9:21 AM
To: Senator Prague
Subject: Raised bills 5110, 5111, and 5112

Dear Senator Prague,

My name is Nancy Trawick-Smith and I am the director of Community Companion and Homemaking Services, a non-profit companion-homemaker agency in Willimantic. I am also a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Homemakers and Companions Association (CTHCA) I had intended to come to this morning's public hearing of the Select Committee on Aging but the weather and the poor road conditions have prevented me from attending. I am writing now to state the position of CTHCA on three of the bills that have been raised by the committee.

Raised Bill 5110

AN ACT CONCERNING CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR EMPLOYEES OF HOMEMAKER-COMPANION AGENCIES AND HOME HEALTH AGENCIES. We at Connecticut Homemakers and Companions Association support this bill's definition of comprehensive background check and agree that a thorough check should be made of all employees of companion-homemaker and home health care agencies. It's my belief that since Companion-homemakers agencies were required to register with the Department of Consumer Protection several years ago that most if not all companion-homemaker agencies are running a thorough check on all employees. We think that it is important that all agencies that send individuals into the homes of our elderly citizens should be held to the same standards.

The provision in the bill that we do not support, however, is that the Department of Consumer Protection could "revoke, suspend or refuse to issue or renew any certificate of registration as a homemaker-companion agency or place an agency on probation or issue a letter of reprimand because of the conduct

an employee of the agency while in the course of employment” We disagree that a homemaker-companion agency should be held responsible for an employee if all background checks and training of that employee followed the regulations. The current regulations under the DCP basically state that this will only happen because of the conduct of the agency. That sentence was in the original legislation but has been omitted since that time.

Raised Bill 5111

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ALZHEIMER'S RESPITE CARE PROGRAM. The Connecticut Homemakers and Companions Association is very supportive of this program and would hope that the funds that were appropriated in this year's budget could be released. I have been in business for 17 years and I can tell you that the older individuals with Alzheimer's that I see are, indeed, the most at risk of entering long term care nursing facilities. One of the main reasons is that the caregivers become completely burned out. There is a book called "the 36-hour day". It's a guide for caring for people with Alzheimer's disease. This title is a perfect description for what these caregivers go through. Getting respite for caregivers is vital to their going on with their care giving responsibilities. Not to put it into dollars and cents, but everyday that you can support those caregivers and keep that individual with dementia out of a nursing home is saving the government a great deal of money. My neighbor had Alzheimer's disease and entered a nursing home when his wife was no longer able to care for him. He was in a nursing home for seven years before he passed away.

Raised Bill 5112

AN ACT REDUCING THE INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION UNDER THE STATE-FUNDED HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY

The Connecticut Homemakers and Companions Association supports this bill. I am seeing firsthand that this provision is causing undue stress and hardship to the elders that are affected. These older adults who previously received needed home care services at no cost have suddenly been faced with charges that can range as high as \$300-\$400 per month. Many have been forced to reduce essential home care services or withdraw from the program altogether.

While there may be some very short term savings as a result of lower utilization of the Home Care for Elders Program and implementation of the co-pay, these savings will disappear when older adults opt out of a program that has consistently shown to be effective at keeping or delaying them from admission to a long term nursing facility. As you know, nursing home care is far more costly than home delivered health and support services. Care to residents in long term nursing facilities already consumes a great deal of the state's Medicaid funding.

I want to encourage you to contact me at any time and would like to thank you for all you do for Connecticut's senior citizens.

Sincerely,

Nancy Trawick-Smith

Chairman, Connecticut Homemakers and Companions Association Director, Community Companion and Homemaking Services

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