

Good afternoon. My name is Alice Pritchard and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF). CWEALF is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women, girls and their families to achieve equal opportunities in their personal and professional lives. I am testifying today on behalf of the Allied Health Workforce Policy Board in support of *SB 171 An Act Establishing a Licensed Practical Nurse Program*.

The Connecticut Allied Health Workforce Policy Board (AHWPB) was established in Public Act 04-220 (*An Act Concerning Allied Health Workforce Needs*) to conduct research and planning activities related to the allied health workforce. The Board began meeting in March 2005 and issued its first report to the legislature in February 2006. Throughout its tenure, the Board has met regularly to discuss current initiatives in allied health in the state, gaps in workforce data, issues related to educational programming, and recruitment and retention of the workforce, as well as researching and developing solutions to allied health workforce shortages.

In the February 2006 report to the legislature, the AHWPB identified the need for a comprehensive state faculty staffing plan to address workforce shortages in all allied health professions. The plan was intended to determine the faculty necessary to meet current and projected labor market training needs in all areas, across all public and private institutions and outline the current and needed resources for allied health programs to meet the workforce shortages.

Interview data from faculty having program oversight and management of over 20 discrete allied health program areas, coupled with Department of Higher Education graduation data and CT DOL ten year occupational projections, and online student registration data showed an allied health worker shortage in 15 (44%) of the 34 identified career areas; and an oversupply in 19 areas.

The area of LPN was found to be undersupplied when analyzed on a one year basis but matched when you average the two year cycle figure of graduates to demand. Because for many of the programs the length of study is 18 months, graduation figures spike every other year.

The CT DOL indicates that there are 324 annual openings per year and expects a 13% increase between 2006 and 2016 (over 1,000 positions). The CT Technical High School System's LPN program graduated 345 students in January 2010. The Legislative Program Review and Investigation (PRI) Committee's recent report on postsecondary alignment found that employers have a 4% vacancy rate for LPNs despite graduates from public and private educational providers. The report does show an over production of graduates in 2008 but doesn't provide 2007 data which would show no graduates because of the 18 month program cycle.

Clearly, these programs play a critical role in meeting this demand. However, Governor Rell's mitigation plan announced on November 24, 2009, included suspension of all LPN programs at the Connecticut Technical High Schools denying the next class of approximately 400 students' entrance into the program. This decision closes the only publicly funded LPN programs in the state and will directly impact employers' ability to hire trained professionals. In addition, this

closure diminishes the work supported through the Career Ladder Initiative that has been done to develop a career pathway from LPN to RN through the state's public universities.

Thus, the Allied Health Workforce Policy Board is in full support of reinstating the LPN program and we urge your support of SB 171.

I thank you for your time and am always available to answer any questions or provide additional information. Copies of *Allied Health Workforce Policy Board's Annual Legislative Report* were sent to your offices earlier this month.