

**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE CUNNINGHAM
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
RE: RAISED BILL 5451
MARCH 12, 2010**

Good morning Chairman Harris, Chairman Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is Christine Cunningham, I have been a licensed RN,BSN, for approximately 20 years and have been employed by the American Red Cross for approximately 6 years.

I would like to comment on Raised Bill 5451, An Act Concerning the Operation of Blood Drives.

I am testifying **in favor** of section 1, paragraph (c)

According to the FDA, blood is a medication. Therefore, we need to have a licensed RN or LPN at every drive as the qualified medical designee to ensure the health and safety of donors, staff and the general public and to protect the integrity of the national blood supply.

A licensed RN or LPN has the necessary education and medical experiences needed to make decisions critical to safe and successful blood collection in accordance with state and federal regulations and guidelines.

A licensed RN or LPN has the medical expertise needed to understand the broad set of medical conditions and pharmaceutical histories in order to determine donor eligibility or seek medical clearance from an appointed physician.

A licensed RN or LPN has the medical expertise needed to identify the severity of and provide appropriate care for donors that have a light, moderate, or severe reaction before, during or after the blood donation process.

A licensed RN or LPN has the medical expertise needed to deliver CPR / AED and First Aid and to identify the need to contact EMS and assist in providing a medically safe and smooth transition to an off-site emergency medical facility.

I am testifying **against** Sec. 3. Section 19a-285a

16-year olds are for the most part still minor children and in most cases we treat these minor children differently from adults because we consider them incapable of the understanding, emotional stability, and altruism needed to make an informed and mature decision such as donating blood that will ultimately impact the health and safety of themselves and others.

A blood donor needs to exemplify that he or she is in good health and that he or she fully understands that their decision to donate their blood will ultimately impact the health and safety of themselves and the recipients of their blood or blood products. In many cases, a 16-year-old will have difficulty completing the interview process due to their lack of awareness of where they have travelled, the types of medications that they are presently taking, or recent medical diagnoses and treatments that they may have received. They also seem to lack maturity and even honesty when presented with critical questions regarding sexual history and orientation.

Due to frequent adverse reactions and complications among minor donors, there are now specific minimum height and weight requirements that all high school students, regardless of age, who present at high school drives and all donors under the age of 19 who present at community drives must meet. This seems to indicate that the minor donor population is inherently problematic, and accepting 16-year old donors will complicate donor safety and blood collection integrity significantly.

Submitted by,

Christine Cunningham RN, BSN