



# CONNECTICUT PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

A COMPONENT OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

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## Testimony of

**Victor Vaughan, Past President  
CT Physical Therapy Association**

## Before the

**Program Review & Investigations Committee  
&  
Join Committee on Public Health**

***HB 5258, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING  
SCOPE OF PRACTICE DETERMINATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE  
PROFESSIONS.***

My name is Vic Vaughan, representing the Connecticut Physical Therapy Association (CPTA). I have served as President and Legislative Chairman of CPTA and currently am an alternate to the Federal Government Affairs Committee of the American Physical Therapy Association.

***I am here today to oppose H.B. 5258, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS  
COMMITTEE CONCERNING SCOPE OF PRACTICE DETERMINATIONS FOR  
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS.***

As many of you know, our organization led a nearly twenty year fight to secure Direct Access to physical therapy services for patients in Connecticut, before winning passage just three years ago. Our case was well-supported by the evidence and allowable practice in 40 states across the country, before it finally became law here. As participants in such an arduous battle, you would think we would be very supportive of a process that brings logic and reason to Legislative "turf fights."

Unfortunately, we don't believe this bill succeeds in its goal of making scope of practice changes follow a more reasoned, logical, evidenced based path. Instead, we believe it discriminates in favor of the status quo and actually has a bias towards current practice over an evidenced based practice. The bill does nothing to streamline the current process for passing legislation. In fact it adds an additional step that occurs outside of the legislative process, before one can begin the actual legislative process. It also provides even greater advantage to large professional organizations that have significant resources.

The Legislature is not about to cede its authority in matters of scope of practice. As a result, all we are adding is another layer that must be navigated to make the case for a change. It would still be necessary to fight successfully in the CT General Assembly as well and to garner the Governor's support. Unless something is removed from the current process this bill will not streamline any legislation requesting a change in scope. If you believe that all health care scopes are appropriate currently, you should support this proposal. However, historically health care and health care education has continued to evolve, therefore changes in scope will be both inevitable and most likely appropriate. With that being true then there is no need to make the challenges of appropriately changing scope of practice more difficult for the little guy.

What would happen if a small organization, or for that matter a single health care professional, identifies an issue that merits the Legislature's attention. This proposal would require that person to hire an attorney or a lobbyist to prepare the petition to the Department. If they missed the deadline, because they are not normally involved in advocacy, they must wait an entire year for consideration. If they don't meet the standard required by DPH, they must wait again. While we are comfortable that our organization has the resources to get this right, it seems to fly in the face of a citizens' right to petition the Legislature or even the general concept of a citizen legislature.

Thank you all for your attention to this matter. As someone who has spent a great deal of time here over the past two decades, I understand and appreciate the desire to improve the system. Unfortunately, I believe the proposal before us today simply adds another layer of bureaucracy, without much additional value. We look forward to working with the Committee and the rest of the General Assembly throughout the session.