



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

**Aging Committee
Public Hearing
March 3, 2011**

Written Testimony of Laurie Julian, Director of Public Policy, Alzheimer's Association, CT Chapter (The Association).

Senator Prague, Representative Sera and distinguished members of the Aging Committee, on behalf of the Alzheimer's Association, CT Chapter, we submit this testimony in support of S.B. 3, An Act Concerning Background Checks for Employees of Home-maker Companion Agencies and Home Health Agencies.

The Alzheimer's Association is a donor supported, non-profit organization serving the needs of families, health care professionals and those individuals who are affected with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Association provides information and resources, support groups, education and training, and a 24 hour, 7 day a week Helpline.

We support this legislation to require criminal background checks on those individuals who serve our most vulnerable population. The lack of legislation leaves the frail and elderly susceptible to potential physical or verbal abuse and financial exploitation. Heightened protection is necessary for individuals with Alzheimer's due to their diminished cognitive capacity. Unfortunately, there have been several cases demonstrating the risk of abuse, fraud and theft by home care aides and others. Criminal background checks provide assurances to families of loved-ones who entrust care in their homes.

Criminal history checks are required for other professionals, such as public school employees, school nurses, police officers, bail bondsmen and enforcement agents, private investigators, state marshals, locksmiths, pawnbrokers and precious metals dealers. Criminal history checks are also required for applicants for nursing home licenses, various types of gaming related licenses, detective and security service licenses, and even taxicab company certificates, and various entities in the financial services industry.

The Federal Affordable Care Act of 2010 directs the Secretary of Health And Human Services to establish a national program to identify efficient and effective procedures for long-term care facilities and providers to conduct background checks on a statewide basis on all prospective direct patient access employees.

As part of the implementation of this background check program, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has tentatively awarded Connecticut a total of \$1.9 million in federal funds to assist in establishing such a mandate background check program through 2012. The Department of Public Health is the lead agency in Connecticut to administer funds resulting from CMS' grant opportunity for this expanded background check program. With the shift to rebalancing long term care delivery to home-based care, Connecticut should avail itself of this opportunity to protect seniors and disabled in their homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you need further information, please contact me at laurie.julian@alz.org, or (860) 828-2828.