



## CONNECTICUT HOMEMAKER & COMPANION ASSOCIATION

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### **AN ACT CONCERNING CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR EMPLOYEES OF HOMEMAKER-COMPANION AGENCIES AND HOME HEALTH AGENCIES.**

Senator Prague, Representative Serra and members of the Aging Committee, my name is Nancy Trawick-Smith and I am the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Homemakers and Companions Association. I am here to testify in support of SB 3, **An Act Concerning Criminal Background Checks for Employees of Homemaker-Companion Agencies and Home Health Agencies.** I believe that this is the second year that this bill has been raised. In 2010 we also sent in testimony supporting this bill.

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. In 2006 a law was passed mandating companion-homemakers agencies to register with the Department of Consumer Protection and to perform comprehensive background checks. Most if not all agencies since that time have interpreted "comprehensive background check" to mean a check that includes a criminal background check. I would like to add that agencies usually carry some sort of liability insurance which also requires that we perform criminal background checks on our staff. This requirement is not new for us.

CTHCA feels that it is important that all the individuals who go into the homes of older individuals be thoroughly vetted. My only concern is that this

legislation as it stands does not protect the elderly individual from that private person who is referred by the senior center or who advertises in the paper or on websites. It is now commonplace for companion-homemaker agencies and home health care agencies to conduct background checks. The internet and the Connecticut Judicial Website have made these checks very easy to do. What we don't want is for the unregulated private market to become a haven for persons who do not pass the background checks that are required by agencies and would like to see more to guarantee that this doesn't happen.

I would like to thank you for hearing my testimony and encourage you to contact me with any questions you might have.

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