



March 7, 2011

To: Government Administration & Elections Committee

From: Terry Edelstein, President/CEO

Re: **H.B. No. 5475 AAC State Contracting with Businesses Owned by Minorities and Persons with Disabilities**

I'd like to comment on HB 5475 An Act Concerning Contracting with Businesses Owned by Minorities and Persons with Disabilities.

The Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA) represents organizations that provide services and supports for people with disabilities and significant challenges including children and adults with substance use disorders, mental illness, developmental, and physical disabilities.

Our Association administers a statutorily authorized Preferred Purchasing Program for people with disabilities (CGS Section 17b-656). Through this program we administer contracts with state agencies that provide employment for people with disabilities. 775 individuals with disabilities were employed through the Preferred Purchasing Program in FY10.

With the assistance of this Committee we were pleased to be able to expand this program several years ago to create a pilot program that provides employment in the janitorial field for people with disabilities and people with economic disadvantages.

We will be glad to work with the proponents of the proposed legislation to assist in designing and implementing the proposed study or following up on other recommendations that will further support people with disabilities and those with economic disadvantages in obtaining and retaining employment. Perhaps the Committee will consider setting goals for allocating contracts for people with disabilities, for example, adding statutory language that will assure that a designated percentage of state contracts are awarded to people with disabilities similar to the requirements for other set-aside programs.

Thank you for your consideration. Community providers deliver quality health and human services to 500,000 of Connecticut's residents each year. We are the safety net.

**CCPA**

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