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February 24, 2011

Senator Doyle, Representative Taborsak and members of the General Law Committee.

Re: S.B. No 911 (Raised) An Act Concerning Homemaker Services and Homemaker-Companion Agencies

As franchise owner and president of Home Instead Senior Care #307 in Trumbull and Sandy Hook, Connecticut, I wish to express my support of SB911.

Fifteen months ago the One Hundred Eleventh Congress of the United States of America passed by unanimous consent H.Con.Res.59. This resolution speaks to senior caregiving and the importance of recognizing the caregivers who provide the care. It states "Whereas in order to address the surging population of seniors who have significant needs for in-home care, the field of senior caregiving will continue to grow." It resolved that Congress recognizes caregiving as a profession.

It is paramount that we recognize this exponentially growing business and the outcome it may have on the elderly consumer and the professional caregiver. In the State of Connecticut, there are homemaker-companion agencies structured as registries. Under the "registry" business model there are serious liability, quality and legal implications for both the elderly consumer and the professional caregiver. It is also questionable as to the business relationship between the registry, the consumer and the caregiver. Senate Bill 911 addresses homemaker-companion agencies and the need to regulate those agencies operating as "registries."

The elderly consumer has the right to quality home care when provided by professional caregivers through homemaker-companion agencies. If the agency is a registry, there are critical concerns as to whether or not the consumer is receiving the quality care they need by professional caregivers. Some of these concerns include, but are not limited to:

1. There is no over site of the case, no supervision of the caregiver, and no quality assurance checks to ensure the consumer is receiving the needed services;
2. It is doubtful that the caregivers are bonded and insured since they are not employed by the agency (registry) and they are not aware of the business relationship or lack of one, and
3. Are comprehensive background checks performed on all caregivers? How are their skill levels determined, and who is providing the on-going education to the caregiver?

The registry model also has legal implications for the professional caregiver who is often uncertain and confused about the business relationship.

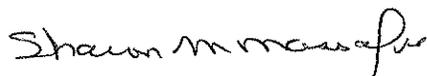
For example:

A caregiver, (I'll call her Dorothy) was hired by an agency to care for a relative of mine in a nursing home. When the case ended, Dorothy was looking for other work and she signed on with two other agencies. One was a registry model but appeared no different from the other agencies she had worked for. Caregivers often sign on with more than one home care agency to be assured of assignments. When I saw Dorothy about one year later, she was quite upset. She is a single mom, with two children and living paycheck to paycheck. Dorothy was taking care of a client she received through a registry. Her client was paying her for services rendered weekly and this went on for approximately nine months. In December of that year, her client became gravely ill and the client's son who lives out of state took over bill payment and management. He wrote out a check to Dorothy and informed her he would be submitting a 1099 form in January. Dorothy was devastated as was her client. Every penny of Dorothy's paycheck went to living expenses and she had no money to pay taxes. Neither client nor caregiver was informed of the responsibilities and legal liabilities placed upon each other. They were not informed of an employer/employee arrangement.

Clearly defining the business relationship, responsibilities and legal liabilities of and between the elderly consumer, the professional caregiver and registries is imperative in meeting the home care needs of our growing senior population and the caregiving profession.

It is incumbent on all of us to work together to set the "gold" standard in the homemaker-companion agency industry. I strongly support any efforts that help regulate homemaker-companion agencies that operate as registries and encourage you to vote in favor of Bill No.911. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Sharon M. Massafra
Franchise Owner/President

Attachment: signed resolution H.Con.Res.59

One Hundred Eleventh Congress
of the
United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday,
the sixth day of January, two thousand and nine*

Concurrent Resolution

Whereas 8,000 people in the United States turn 60 years old every day;

Whereas an estimated 35,900,000 people, 12.4 percent of the population, are 65 years of age and older;

Whereas the United States population age 65 and older is expected to more than double in the next 50 years to 86,700,000 in 2050;

Whereas the 85 and older population is projected to reach 9,600,000 in 2030 and double again to 20,900,000 in 2050;

Whereas it is estimated that 4,500,000 people in the United States have Alzheimer's disease today;

Whereas it is estimated that number will increase to between 11,300,000 and 16,000,000 by 2050;

Whereas 70 percent of people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias live at home, and these individuals are examples of individuals who need assistance in their homes with their "activities of daily living";

Whereas currently over 25 percent of all seniors need some level of assistance with their "activities of daily living";

Whereas in order to address the surging population of seniors who have significant needs for in-home care, the field of senior caregiving will continue to grow;

Whereas there are an estimated 44,000,000 adults in the United States providing care to adult relatives or friends and an estimated 725,000 nonfamily private paid senior caregivers;

Whereas both unpaid family caregivers and paid caregivers work together to serve the daily living needs of seniors who live in their own homes;

Whereas the Department of Labor estimated that paid caregivers for the year 2006 worked a total of 835,000,000 hours, and the projected hours of paid senior caregivers are estimated to increase to 4,350,000,000 hours by 2025; and

Whereas the longer a senior is able to provide for his or her own care, the less burden is placed on public payment systems in State and Federal governments: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

- (1) recognizes caregiving as a profession;
- (2) supports the private home care industry and the efforts of family caregivers nationwide by encouraging individuals to provide care to family, friends, and neighbors;
- (3) encourages accessible and affordable care for seniors;
- (4) reviews Federal policies and supports current Federal programs which address the needs of seniors and their family caregivers; and
- (5) encourages the Secretary of Health and Human Services to continue working to educate people in the United States on the impact of aging and the importance of knowing the options available to seniors when they need care to meet their personal needs.

