



February 24, 2011
General Law Committee

RE: Bill #911: AN ACT CONCERNING HOMEMAKER SERVICES AND HOMEMAKER-COMPANION AGENCIES

My name is Andrew Clifford, owner of Home Instead Senior Care, an employee-based provider of non-medical home care services in New Haven County since 2002. I am here to express my support for Bill #911.

As a relatively new industry, non-medical home care has seen a surge in providers of late, each offering a similar scope of service such as companionship, light housekeeping, incidental transportation, meal preparation and errands. These services are all designed to keep seniors safe and independent at home.

With the variety of service providers comes a variety of operational models, the two most popular being employee-based agencies and registries. Registries match up independent contractors with clients. As such, there are no taxes withheld or matched, no Workers Compensation insurance, and no Social Security or Medicare contributions made on behalf of the worker.

I often field calls from anxious family members faced with a crisis. Their mother has fallen and broken her hip. Following a hospital and rehab stay, she is being released and wants to go home. But she is unsafe to be alone. The caller, meanwhile, is trying to balance home and work life and needs to arrange help for her mom. She is desperate and faced with an important decision. She needs information.

A quick search of the Yellow Pages or Google for "home care in Connecticut" yields many different choices for the consumer. However, there is no distinction as to how providers operate. At first glance, all providers seem to be created equal, and many consumers base their decision on the most logical factor: price.

But in reality, they are often comparing apples and oranges based on a provider's business model. Registries often charge less than employee-based agencies. They may provide a similar "scope of service," but the method in which they provide it—namely utilizing independent contractors—is fundamentally different. This puts the consumer in an awkward and vulnerable position. Consumers often don't know the difference and are unaware of the implications.

"What if the worker gets hurt assisting my mom?" "Who will supervise the worker?" "Who handles the payroll taxes?" These are all key questions for consumers to ask when researching home care services, but very few know to ask them.

I have made it a priority to help to educate consumers in need so that they may make informed decisions. Now I ask the state's assistance via Bill #911. Thank you.

Andrew Clifford, Owner
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