

Deborah L. Barisano
123 Meetinghouse Lane
Middletown, CT 06457
860-670-4219
dbarisano@comcast.net

Human Services Committee
Public Hearing March 8, 2011

Testimony opposed to:
**HB6486: AN ACT CONCERNING HOME HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT WORKFORCE
COUNCIL.**

Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Human Services Committee;

My name is Deborah Barisano and I am a personal care attendant (sometimes referred to as a Personal Care Assistant/PCA). My testimony is in opposition to HB6486 **AN ACT CONCERNING HOME HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT WORKFORCE COUNCIL**. I am opposed to the bill for three main reasons: 1) a union between the relationship of the personal care attendant and the employer (person with a disability) would be very bad; 2) the bill mandates an invasion of my privacy by giving my name to the union; and 3) the state is cutting expenses, raising taxes, and consolidating agencies, the state can not afford to start a new agency (Personal Care Attendant Workforce Council).

First let me tell you why I love being a personal care attendant. PCA's support people with disabilities to live independently in the community. The relationship between the person with a disability and the PCA is very unique because of the personal nature of our work. It is based on mutual respect, teamwork, and concern for one another's well being. Introducing a union into this mix can only destabilize the relationship. I was a computer programmer for over 20 years making \$60,000 a year and I turned my back on that job for a lower paying job as a PCA. I do not regret that decision at all because I have a better, more fulfilling and rewarding job where I am appreciated and very very happy. I would not want a workforce council interfering with my relationship with my employer, which is the number one reason I love this job. Please do not destroy the PCA services in Connecticut by allowing the union to come between PCA's and their employers. This could be a large barrier and put people with disabilities in danger if the union has a sick out or other means of pressure.

Second, this bill requires the names of personal care attendants be given to the union. "The Commissioner of Social Services, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Commissioner of Developmental Services, shall compile and maintain a list of the names and addresses of all personal care attendants who have been paid through a state-funded program that provides personal care services.... Not later than October 1, 2011, the Commissioner of Social Services shall provide the initial list of personal care attendants to the council and to the State Board of Labor Relations." I feel this is an invasion of my

privacy. **I do not want my name and address given to the union. I do not want pressure or threats from the union.** I have been told by the union representative that even if I do not join the union I will be required to pay an agency fee just like union dues. I have no doubt the pressure will be put on personal assistants because even this past weekend personal assistants were being called by the union and told to testify on Tuesday. Where did they already get personal assistants names and telephone numbers? In 2009 the SEIU lead organizer and other SEIU organizers formed their own union to picket against the SEIU for unfair labor practices. (SEIU's lead organizer Melissa Pinnick picketing the SEIU and yelling "How do you spell hypocrisy? S.E.I.U.!" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwsVnbLruwI>) I definitely do not want to join a union where there own members picket for unfair practices.

Third, at a time when the Governor is making cuts, raising taxes, and consolidating agencies, how can money be put into starting a new agency (Personal Care Attendant Workforce Council) that will be responsible for recruiting personal assistants, maintaining a registry, education and training, and negotiating with the union. Even starting with a study takes time and money that the state does not have now.

I urge you to oppose HB6486 and save personal attendant services in the State of Connecticut. Help personal attendants keep their job barrier free and keep the job we love. Help people with disabilities live independently in the community with the loyal personal attendants without a union in between. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Respectfully,

Deborah L. Barisano