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### Testimony for raised bill no. 6486

I am opposed to [Raised Bill No. 6486](#). I am a PCA, and have been for ten years. I am opposed to this bill for the following reasons:

The bill states that the work force council will be responsible for creating a registry of PCA's to distribute to consumers for the purposes of creating available respite, backup or emergency care. I feel that this registry is a violation of my right to privacy. I don't need or want to be on a statewide registry. I work as a part time PCA; I have never had any problems working the amount of hours I need, or finding consumers with whom to work. I do not want to receive calls from the PCA registry asking me to provide backup or emergency care. Of course I could always say no, but chances are pretty good that I would feel compelled to cover the shift. Then a situation is created where I am caring for a stranger, not because I want to, but because I feel compelled to. Is this the type of "quality" personal care that you would like to create in Connecticut?

Also, there are several reported incidents where the registry was released to Union recruiters, not for the stated purpose of backup care, but for intimidation purposes to vote for a union. I am strongly opposed to a Union of PCAs. I am not opposed to unions in general, actually I think they are very useful *in some industries*. Unions are appropriate for industries such as the automobile, factory, or inner-city public schools industries, industries in which there may not be the most desirable conditions for workers. In those cases the employees need a representative to make sure they are treated fairly and have favorable working conditions. This is not the case with PCA's. Would it be nice to have higher wages and benefits such as insurance and paid days off? Of course, but not at the detriment of the PCA/consumer relationship. Anyone who is a PCA knows that there is not a lot of money in this field, and they are not in this field for that reason, they are a PCA because they want a satisfying, rewarding job caring for people in a one-on-one environment. Having a union would greatly affect the relationship between PCA and consumer in a negative manner.

Bill No. 6486 states that the work force council proposed would be responsible for establishing "conditions of employment". I believe each individual consumer should be able to set their own conditions of employment; they are the only ones who know exactly what they need from a PCA. How can an outside agency set "conditions of employment" for a large group of very diverse individuals? Not only will that be effecting consumer's needs from being met, but I believe this will also reduce the work force of PCAs. Some of the best PCA's have no formal education or experience in the field, because it all comes down to the chemistry between consumer and PCA. And although education is important in any field, in this case the most important education is the training given by each individual consumer, as each consumer has vastly different needs.

Having a third party responsible for wages, benefits and conditions of employment, essentially strips the consumers of their rights to have control over their environment and PCA's. I own a large childcare center of 93 children. I employ approximately 30 employees. I could never imagine being put in the position of having an outside, third party deciding what the wages, benefits, or conditions of employment would be for my staff! What motivation would my employees have for listening to me at all? I would lose all power and creditability. Some people might think, "you are not the one who pays my salary, so I don't

need to make you happy.” Can you see how this would be detrimental to a consumer/PCA relationship? This type of situation would be absolutely unheard of in the private business world. What, perhaps, the state doesn’t realize is that each consumer is not just an individual, but should be thought of as a “small business”. They are in the business of living their lives to their fullest potential, and they require staff to make that happen. They should be afforded the same rights as any business owner; namely the right to decide their staffs’ wages, benefits and conditions of employment.

Besides the effect on the everyday relationship this could have, what about in the event that PCA’s statewide decide that they are unhappy with wages or benefits and they need to take action. I realize that it would be illegal for PCA’s to stage a strike, but what of a “sick out”? It is illegal for police officers to strike, yet we have all heard of the “blue flu”. In the event that PCA’s did decide to take action against their “employer” (in this case the third party making all the decisions) the consumers are the ones who would suffer and they are absolutely powerless to negotiate any conditions in which the PCA’s might be taking a stand against. A “sick out” in this industry could result in hundreds and hundreds of deaths across the state. In a nursing home if there is a “sick out” there are at least administrators, secretaries, owners, etc. who can jump in and care for the residents. The residents may not receive the best care during a sick out, as one person might be caring for two or three times the amount of residents as usual, but they will receive adequate care and they will stay alive. In the event of a PCA “sick out” we are talking about individual consumers in their homes; who will the work force council get to cover the absent PCAs? Will the 13 members of the work force council go to consumers homes to cover these PCA’s? There are no administrators, owners, or friends that can pitch in. In the event that PCAs are persuaded to stage a sick out, how many people could you find to cover their care? 500? Even if you could find 500 people, there are thousands of consumers statewide, how do you decide who receives care that day and who dies because there was not enough care available? Right now, there would never be a statewide PCA “sick out” because PCA’s are not united; they are individuals. You need a united force in order to stage a statewide “sick out”.

I do not disagree with the fact that there should be a uniting force for PCA’s, to work on higher wages and benefits, but that force should not be the SEIU. I do not trust the SEIU to have the PCAs’ and the consumers’ best interests in mind. I have seen videos and documents in which the SEIU has only the best interest of the SEIU in mind. They have a reputation of using intimidation, bullying, and violence to get people to do what they want. Are these the type of people that we will trust the lives of our disability community with?

Thank you for your time

Michelle Tyler