



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE **TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2011**

PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY

MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

RE: H.B. No. 6486 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING HOME HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT WORKFORCE COUNCIL.

Good Afternoon Chairman Musto, Chairman Tercyak, Ranking Member Markley, Ranking Member Gibbons and Human Services Committee Members. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to testify on House Bill 6486, a bill which, if enacted, will take away the rights of disabled citizens currently saving the state millions of dollars by managing their PCA's.

From 2002 - 2004, I worked for a disabled individual as an Aide. My capacity was similar to that of a PCA, supporting normal every day duties for a gentleman who was fully dependent on his PCA's or Aide. During this time, I became very aware of the savings to the state from direct PCA or Aide contracting, versus the previously used third party management model. I learned that a third party only increases cost, not quality. In the case of Aide's, an administrative cost of up to 100%. Further, that no standard training would assist all clients. Some have brain injury, others are confined to a wheel chair, or others suffer personal challenges.

In 2006, I had the unique opportunity to help my friend Brian LaHomme obtain an assistance dog (www.briansquest.com). Brian is a paraplegic, who has a degenerative muscular condition, but is able to live independently with the help of PCA's. Just like my client previously, he has no issues finding, training and managing PCA's. I do not see the benefit to either the state or the individual by reinserting a third party manager back into the personal care attendant system.

I believe this legislation is being pushed by a union seeking to obtain more funding through expanded membership. If one were to break down the number of PCA's, typically has 3 to 4 per individual, it is easy to realize there are thousands on top of the thousands of Connecticut disabled residents who have these waivers.

As someone who recognizes that most who will be affected by this legislation, like my friend and client, are more than competent to recruit, hire, train and employ PCA's directly, I ask the committee put these citizens individual rights ahead of the financial and longevity interests of any union.