

Testimony

In Opposition to Raised Bill No. 6486 – An Act Concerning Home Health Care Services And The Establishment Of A Personal Care Attendant Workforce Council.

Human Services Committee

March 8, 2011

Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak, Senator Markley, Representative Gibbons, and members of the Human Services Committee:

I wish to go on record saying I oppose Raised Bill 6486 – An Act Concerning Home Health Care Services And The Establishment Of A Personal Care Attendant Workforce Council. A consumer in need of personal care assistance or a surrogate acting on behalf of the consumer should be free from any council or labor relations policy in establishing an employer and employee agreement between the consumer or surrogate and the personal care attendant. The relationship between consumer and PCA oftentimes becomes one of family, and instituting a workforce council as arbitrator can cause an unhealthy tension to such a relationship. Although a consumer or surrogate shall have the right to hire, supervise, direct, and terminate employment, a decision made by the council could jeopardize an accord between employer and employee. All employment-related covenants should be and must only be between the consumer, or surrogate, and the personal care attendant. There cannot be any other party involved.

The last task a person requiring personal assistance wants to perform is recruiting, hiring, or training new attendants. Peace of mind is working with a PCA that knows the needs of the person he or she is assisting, that performs the established routine without guidance, and that understands the personality and idiosyncrasies of the one he or she is caring for. These qualities are valuable and irreplaceable to someone whose day-to-day existence depends on them. Creating a workforce council will inevitably add to what is already a high turnover rate.

Although I do not receive services from a state-funded program, I am dependent on assistance from personal care attendants and know firsthand the importance of a low turnover rate. A person who is accustomed to my routine will take between one and one-half to two hours in the morning and the same in the evening to perform the care activities I require. When training a new attendant, this time increases 100%, or more, for an average duration of two months. It not only extends the time needed to perform my care routine, it presents an extreme demand on the time I need to perform my duties. Such an impediment affects every aspect of my life, including my office as a Connecticut State Representative.

Please do not pass HB6486. The work began by this committee in setting up a personal care assistance program will have been an effort in vain with a vote to pass it.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Molgano