



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT SAMPSON  
EIGHTIETH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 4200  
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423  
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700  
HOME: (203) 879-3200

EMAIL: Rob.Sampson@housegop.ct.gov

MEMBER  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

*Testimony by Representative Rob Sampson  
Before the Planning & Development Committee  
On House Bill 5142  
February 7, 2010*

Good morning Chairman Cassano, Chairman Gentile, Representative Aman, Senator Fasano, and members of the Planning & Development Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'm here this morning to express my support for **HB 5142 – AN ACT REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE LOCATION OF GROUP HOMES.**

Currently, state law prohibits local zoning regulations from treating group residences in any way that differs from any other single family residence providing it meets certain criteria. 1) It houses six or fewer people with mental illness or substance abuse disorders or 2) It houses six or fewer children with mental or physical disabilities. Aside from state law, there are also a myriad of federal anti-discrimination requirements that prevent just such a law from being enacted.

However, the fact that you have this proposed bill before you as well as myself and others testifying on this issue goes to show that despite the above, this is by no means settled. It is in fact, often a controversial and sometimes heated issue. Regardless of their point of view, it is important to remember that there are decent and honorable folks on all sides of this issue and valid arguments from all concerned.

Homeowners and municipalities both have understandable and legitimate reasons for desiring additional information prior to a new group home being sited in their neighborhood or community. Among these are the safety of one's children and the potential increase in unfunded mandates on municipalities. This has to be weighed against the concerns of those who wish to protect the occupants, & patients of these homes. I expect a significant amount of testimony regarding this issue so I won't take your time defining every point and instead leave that up to others.

My personal belief is that there is no harm in disclosure and transparency and that ultimately this benefits both the community and the group home equally. In short, I believe it is incumbent on us to find a solution that satisfies the concerns of all parties and despite the difficulties in overcoming the obstacles I mentioned at the outset, a public hearing seems to me the obvious answer.

Thank you for the hearing on HB 5142 and I wish to express my support of the bill and the committee's favorable action.

Sincerely,

Rep. Rob Sampson