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STATEWIDE COALITION OF PRESIDENTS OF RESIDENT COUNCILS

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Hello, my name is Brian Capshaw and I live at Aurora Senior Living Center of East Hartford a nursing home. I'm testifying on behalf of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils representing all 27,000 Connecticut nursing home residents.

Senator Prague, Representative Serra and distinguished members of the Aging Committee. I like to thank you for putting forth SB 137, fear of retaliation training in nursing homes, SB 139, notification of financial stability of nursing homes and SB 140, establishment of grievance committees in nursing home facilities, SB 177 liability for neglect and abuse, and HB 5215, an increase in the personal needs allowance.

Fear of retaliation is real and does exist. SB 137 is an excellent follow up to the groundbreaking video "Voices Speak Out Against Retaliation" created by the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.

I feel strongly that this training needs to be required to alleviate our fear of the staff members that care for us on a daily basis. Nursing home staff may feel they are acting in a proper manner, but to a resident it may be just the opposite.

A resident gets labeled a "trouble maker" because they've written a formal grievance against an aide, this is a form of retaliation.

SB 139 which requires nursing homes, residential care homes and rest homes with nursing supervision, to notify prospective and current residents about certain financial conditions the facility may be experiencing. It requires the facility to provide notice of receivership or files for bankruptcy or is currently in bankruptcy. Residents and their family members need to know the status of the facility in order to be able to make informed decisions about their living arrangements.

SB 140 would require that each nursing home establish a grievance committee consisting of one resident and two staff members. The person filing the grievance has the option to send their grievance to the committee or kept it private with the administrator. All nursing homes provide a grievance form, but many times they seem to go into a black hole and get lost. By requiring all nursing homes to have a grievance committee, grievances can be resolved in a timely manner.

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SB 177, which holds nursing home owners and certain staff members criminally liable for neglect and abuse of nursing home residents. Nursing home residents and their family members should be able to have the ability to hold the owners and staff of a nursing home liable in the event that they or a loved one have been abused or neglected. We would also like to see the that coroner has to look at all nursing home deaths to determine if abuse or neglect was the cause of death.

HB 5215, which would increase the personal needs allowance 16,000 nursing home residents receive from \$60 to \$65 is a step in the right direction. In the 2011 budget the 16,000 nursing home residents on Medicaid took a 13% or \$9 reduction in their personal needs allowance to save the state 1.7 million dollars, this reduction was listed as temporary in the budget.

Effective January 1st 2012, all social security recipients received a 3.6% increase in their monthly benefit. As nursing home residents we will turn this increase over to the nursing home as cost of care. This results in the state contributing less Medicaid dollars to nursing homes, saving the state \$4 million in Medicaid spending. The \$5 increase comes at a cost of \$1 million, still leaving the state with \$3 million in net Medicaid spending savings. We would also like to see the cost of living adjustment re-instated.

In conclusion, I urge the Senate and the House and both parties to find common ground and pass these bills as written.

I'd to thank the Aging Committee for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge you to support Connecticut's nursing home residents who need quality facilities where they can live without fear, know the facility is financially strong and will be held criminally liable for neglect and abuse, as well as have their grievances resolved in a timely manner. The increase in the personal needs allowance will help to provide for the simple extras that maintain our quality of lives, such as clothing, cable TV, and haircuts.

Thank you

Brian Capshaw
Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Council