



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



Testimony
Labor Committee
March 13, 2012

Raised Bill No. 5433: Testifying Against

AN ACT CREATING A PROCEDURE FOR PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE.

My Name is David King and I live in Bridgeport. I am an appointed member of the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities. The Council is a Governor-appointed Council which includes people with developmental disabilities, family members and professionals working toward full inclusion of children and adults with all disabilities in the community.

I am here today to testify against Bill 5433 regarding Collective bargaining for Personal Care Attendants. This Bill addresses any state-funded program that provides services from a personal care attendant. As someone who uses personal care attendant services, I am really concerned about this bill. And it is not just about me.

This act affects children and adults with disabilities who receive Personal Care Attendant services. In this bill, those services are defined very broadly, and include services that could meet the person's daily living needs, **OR** services that make sure that the person functions in their home **OR** services that provide save access to activities in the community. That could include a lot of different types of support including support from family members who are paid to care for someone, and other types of support including mentors, respite workers or others.

Also, I have a limited amount of funding to pay for my PCA. I train that person myself, to meet my needs. My needs are unique. Training by someone else won't improve the quality of my care.

I don't have enough funding available to support higher wages and union dues out of this small pot of money I am given. And if the money also has to pay union dues, which it will, there will be even less money available. That means that in reality the PCA's lose and so do people with disabilities. Further, most PCA's work less than full time and will not be eligible for benefits anyway. In Michigan where unionization has already happened, individuals and families have lost thousands of dollars each year, gaining absolutely no benefit of any kind.

This bill will allow a PCA Council to enter into collective bargaining agreements to control salary, benefits, training and other requirements. This plan will use state/federal funds to pay union dues and those funds really won't benefit me or any of the other consumers who manage our small pots of money to hire the people who care for us.

Please vote NO on this bill.

Thank you.