Companions & Homemakers
Home Care for Older Adults

LAW DEPARTMENT
613 NEW BRITAIN AVENUE
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032
www.companionsandhomemakers.com

J. MARTIN ACEVEDO, GENERAL COUNSEL
EMAIL: martin.acevedo@elderly-care.com

DIRECT DIAL: (860) 751-6992
FACSIMILE: (860) 409-2531

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Committee on Labor
Testimony Regarding Raised Bill No. 330
"An Act Concerning The Employers of Individuals Providing Homemaker Services, Companion Services and Homemaker-Home Health Aide Services"

DEAR SENATOR PRAGUE AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Martin Acevedo. I am the General Counsel of Companions & Homemakers, Inc., a 20-year old homemaker-companion services provider registered with the Department of Consumer Protection. With ten offices throughout the State of Connecticut, our company cares for over 2,700 elderly consumers in their homes or places of residence and employs approximately 2,300 caregivers.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding Bill 330. I also would like to thank Senator Prague for her strong leadership on this subject and her longstanding commitment to protecting the rights of elderly consumers of home care services and the workers who provide those services.

We are writing in support of this bill. Homemakers, home-health aides, companions, personal care workers, to name a few, follow direction, receive (or are subject to) supervision, are usually moderate-wage earners, and are not customarily engaged in an independent occupation, or profession or business. Consequently, they do not meet the definition of "independent contractor" and are employees of the person or entity who employs them. As employees, they are entitled to certain benefits, including unemployment compensation benefits. We believe that the majority of home care agencies treat their workers as employees. Furthermore, recognizing that these workers

are employees, the State of Connecticut itself has contracted with Allied Community Resources, Inc. to handle the **employer responsibilities** (tax withholdings, etc) of Medicaid clients who elect to hire their own caregivers under a number of "self-directed" care options and programs. (Clearly, if the State of Connecticut had not thought that these workers were employees, it would not have set up a system to ensure the workers were treated as employees, legally and tax-wise.)

In sum, this bill does the right thing by making all types of agencies, particularly registries, play by the same rules all other employer-based agencies have faithfully adhered to—in terms of unemployment contributions and workers' compensation insurance—since the inception of the home care industry in Connecticut.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.