

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

I am writing to you regarding HB 5434, An Act Concerning the Professional Standard of Care for Emergency Medical Providers. I have been a registered nurse at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London for approximately eight years. I have been on my union's executive board for the last six and a half years, and I am proud to have held the title of President for the last four years. As President, I represent over 500 RNs in all areas of L&M Hospital. I feel that the passage of HB 5434 would be extremely beneficial. It would provide an extra layer of protection to not only the 500 nurses that I represent, but to all nurses, nurse's aides, LPN/Techs, EMTs and other healthcare providers (HCPs) throughout the state of CT.

I speak not only for myself, but for healthcare providers everywhere when I say that we come to work every day with only the best intentions in mind. I think that all of us came into our profession because (as cliché as it sounds) we want to help people. We all want to do the best thing for our patients. We want to see them experience the best possible outcome. Unfortunately, the best possible outcome is not always what transpires. HB 5434 speaks to the uncomfortable topic of poor patient outcomes. This is a tragic event for not only the patient, but for the healthcare provider as well. It has been said that every HCP has that one patient experience that we will never forget. We will have one patient that made us feel so helpless: we did everything possible, but something just went wrong; the patient just didn't pull through. Often times, in areas such as an ambulance or an emergency room, there are too many patients that make us feel that way.

In our day and age, the public likes to find a scapegoat for such tragedies. It is much easier to deal with the loss of a loved one if a finger can be pointed or if blame can be assigned. It is not uncommon for a healthcare provider to be sued by a patient or a family member due to a less than optimal result—even if none of the HCPs are responsible for this result. The word "negligence" is thrown around for dramatic effect, without the true definition coming to light. People's emotions get played in an attempt to circumvent the facts and win a case that had no business even coming to trial. When this happens, it is not only a burden to the legal system, but a burden to the healthcare provider. Tax payer's money is wasted in court, and healthcare providers go through unnecessary stress. This trepidation not only affects the HCP in his or her personal life, it affects work life, too. This stress can lead to hesitation and second-guessing when it comes to patient care, resulting in a delay of treatments to critically ill patients.

HB 5434 will make sure that healthcare providers aren't threatened with the idea of a frivolous lawsuit every time they come to work. The amount of unfounded lawsuits will be greatly diminished, and the individuals who really were victims will actually be protected. I think that we all want what is right for the residents of this state—both patients and HCPs alike. HB 5434 is one way to make sure that the right thing will be done.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa D'Abrosca, RN