

My name is Anthony "Unk" DaRos and I am First Selectman of the town of Branford. I am also the Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Connecticut Hospice. As such, I am here to testify against Bill No. 5499.

My reasons are rather straight forward.

First, Connecticut has been at the forefront of providing excellent hospice care to patients and their families; and it should remain the leader in that movement, not a follower.

Second, the Department of Public Health proposed regulations more than one year ago that were intended to change the level of care provided to hospice patients and their families. I opposed those regulations when they were introduced, and I oppose changing the current regulations as incorporated in this legislation. I know as a Board member of Connecticut Hospice and as a family member of a hospice patient that it is unreasonable to enact legislation that is supposed to help the sick and needy by *reducing* the number of nurses, doctors and other caregivers that hospices must provide. While I know that there will be others who can testify as to the medical issues involved, I am sure that this is one situation where LESS is not MORE. Since our regulations were enacted in 1993 patients have had access to inpatient hospice services in the state in hospitals and nursing homes. The legislation will not give better access to the *proper care*. There is no point to enacting legislation that is meant to give patients greater access to inadequate services.

Third, reducing the level of care that will be provided in the hospice in-patient setting creates an environment that is ripe for abuse. Hospice providers who receive benefit payments from the government and insurers will, if the regulations permit it, have the incentive to provide

only the minimum mandated services, thereby cutting costs and increasing profits. This is not conjecture on my part. The press has reported that the federal Department of Justice and the Office of the Inspector General, among others, are currently involved in investigating for-profit hospice providers in other parts of the country. While some of those providers being investigated also operate here, you should keep those questionable practices and investigations out of Connecticut by maintaining the high standards that have been the hallmark of hospice regulations in this state.

I believe that this legislation should not be passed because it is not good for the people of Connecticut who need hospice services. At the very least, this legislation should be put on hold at least until there is study and better understanding of the results of the investigations into the practices by hospices in other parts of the country that are subject to the lesser standards that are being proposed. Now is not the time to rush into new legislation that will adversely affect patients and families in their most trying times.