

March 16, 2012,

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Carole Garfield. I live in Wolcott. I am testifying today in support of HB 5499 An Act Concerning Regulations Related to Hospice Care.

I wanted to testify today to express my gratitude for the great care my Step-dad received during his short stay at the VITAS unit in Waterbury.

Please know, that although very difficult to speak of, I am so very thankful and overwhelmed by the amount of support, both physically and spiritually... everything that each of the VITAS staff so lovingly, genuinely and generously gave during this difficult time.

In all my years, I have never known this field to be so filled with the epitome of kindness gathered all in one place. On behalf of myself and my children, this type of care needs to be offered everywhere in the state.

In the words of my 25 year old daughter Tiffany who collaborated with my 23 year old daughter Brittney to write the obituary, "Finally, you are with people who truly care about the patient, the family and each other. You are finally right where you belong." I don't think truer words could ever be said.

The Inpatient Unit allowed my son who arrived from the West Coast to focus on his last visit with his "hero," and my daughters to sleep by his side with me, in a quiet and nurturing environment. From the moment of arrival to the last moment when my son was allowed to escort his grandfather respectfully down in the elevator with the American flag draped over him, VITAS lived up to everything it so proudly stands for.

Words will never fully express my appreciation for giving back dignity to this very special man.

Having experienced the love and support of VITAS and watching as it was extended to my Step-Dad, I want to say that unless each and every person who has a life limiting illness gets cared for by great hospice service, only then will we have reached our full potential as a state.

So please support HB 5499 so that every available patient can experience the love, support and beautiful care that my Dad was able to receive.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

Carole Garfield, RN
50 Grilley Road
Wolcott, CT