

March 16, 2012

To: The Public Health Committee

Subject: Testimony for March 16, 2012 on **Bill No. HB 5499**

An Act Concerning Regulations Relating To Hospice Care

Gentlemen:

I am a retired business-executive who has volunteered for five years in health care for the elderly, and for past three years, for *Regional Hospice and Home Care of Western Connecticut*, as a 'Hospice Patient and Family Support Volunteer'.

Hospice Volunteers try to bring a little reassurance and some humor to those patients who are facing their imminent end of life. We are "bedside hand-holders", "book readers" and providers of some comfort, often building relationships with both the patients and their families. Those of us who focus on the Hospice patients in nursing facilities, team up and augment the staff of the facility, as they cannot devote the time that is required by our patients and their grieving families.

Our organization in Danbury has been in business for 30 years and is highly regarded. Many of the surrounding towns and corporations help in our support. We are a large and well trained group of volunteers and employees, and we hold ourselves to the highest of standards. Despite all our dedication, we are not able to have our own, dedicated facility entirely focused on end-of-life care.

The **Bill HB 5499** is designed to enable the establishment of regional facilities designed to today's standards. In 2006, my dying mother-in-law had to share a room with three other women in the only In-Patient Facility in CT; Connecticut Hospice. She had a great view, but the family visitations were awkward beyond description and it took us well over an hour to get there. **HB 5499** would change all this; visitations would be private and comfortable and brief visits after work would be possible.

This Bill would enable local facilities to be established with private rooms, and adjoining accommodations for out-of town family members to spend the night. Changing the existing regulation seems long over-due.

I thank you in advance for your support,

W Zachary Taylor

29 Cannon Drive, Newtown, CT 06470

The Bill before you today, provides for specialized and dedicated Hospice care that cannot be provided in the patient's home or even in the best of nursing facilities. This Bill will insure that all hospice patients are provided care in keeping with today's standards and will allow all Hospice organizations in Connecticut, to provide up-dated in-patient facilities.

These modernized facilities allow only one patient per room and can even provide adjoining over-night accommodations for family members.

This is an important improvement to the existing legislation that allowed four dying patients in one room, such as our family experienced in 2006.