



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
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MEMBER
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February 26, 2013

Testimony of Representative Bruce V. Morris on:

Raised Bill no. 936,

An Act Concerning Streamlining Approval for Nursing Homes to Shelter Displaced Residents

Chairman Ayala, Serra, Vice Chair Harp, Rovero, Ranking Members Kelly, Adinolfi, and members of the Aging Committee, I am here to offer the following testimony on Raised Bill no. 936.

I am writing in support of Bill 936 and to provide an additional measure for your consideration from another bill I proposed this year (Bill no. 5984). Given the increased frequency of storms that necessitate a state of emergency declaration and the need to provide emergency placement for residents during such times it has come to my attention that our disabled population living at home and who need minimal medical care are being discouraged from admitting to local emergency shelters – based upon the perception that the shelter will be liable for any unmet medical needs these individuals may have. Disabled residents are thus being referred to local hospitals and nursing homes where they would incur undo financial stress and more importantly risk becoming sick.

Many of these residents are extremely fearful of being admitted to a hospital or nursing home regardless of how short the period of time is. Their only need is for a facility with emergency back up power (which all emergency facilities have) and some may require being semi-isolated from the general population.

While Raised Bill no. 936 fulfills the needs of those who are disabled and living at home and would deem a nursing facility acceptable for their care, the bill furthering addresses the concerns residents have regarding costs. However, it does not address the afore stated need and concern of those who are adverse to such placement, regardless of costs.

My request is that you consider clarifying the options residents have in such a situation – All emergency shelters must fulfill ADA requirements, and thus are surely available to disabled citizens to use if they so choose. As James McCaughey, Executive Director of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, explained to me in a

letter I have attached, many communities do not include home health services in their emergency plans, and no coordination with emergency shelters is contemplated: Residents are automatically brought to hospitals or nursing homes, even against their wishes. Therefore I am asking that you require municipal shelters accept disabled residents who have no major medical needs and have provided a coordinated emergency plan.

Thank you very much,

Representative Bruce V. Morris