

TESTIMONY OF Sonja Zandri, Brookside Rest Home Danbury
IN OPPOSITION TO
HB 6350- AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING
JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE.

Senator Harp, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Sonja Zandri. I am the owner RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME I am unable to attend but want to offer my strong opposition to the Governor's Budget, specifically the capping of residential care home rates and elimination of the small partial rate increase from last year.

The state has capped our rates for the past 3 years. We received a small increase last year and it would be most difficult to go back to it. We have used the increase to give staff a well deserved raise since they've had none in 3 years. Food, liability insurance and health care have all gone way up. Electric and gas have also gone up. I cannot go to my vendors and tell them, "Sorry, but I need to cut you due to frozen rates"!

This only works for the state.

Residential Care Homes are a great value. We offer room and board, 3 meals a day, laundry, housekeeping, activities and assistance with bathing along with companionship. We do all this for \$2196.69 a month. (It would go back to \$2141.94) In my home, we also take residents out for shopping and we drive them to their doctors and spend the time to sit with them for support and understanding. We have residents that have lived with us over 25 years! This is truly a home, not just a business...and isn't that the point?

I am on the CARCH board and have been president twice. I've always been the contact person when someone has a problem or question. I also hear a lot of rumbling going on and the homes on the verge of closing due to all the cuts in our state. Most of us just can't do it anymore and we are losing heart. We've always been a place to take in persons with mental disabilities. We do our best to give them a safe and happy home and hopefully stay out of the hospital. In this day, we don't need persons with disabilities on the street because our homes are closing.

We've also been given new state regulations that have increased our cost. Some homes have med certification which saves the state a lot in not having visiting nurses come in to administer meds. Yet, these same homes that save the state money are being punished with increased liability insurance due to a "risk".

We had 139 homes in 1975 when I started this business. Now, we are down to 99 homes.

So, in closing, we ask that you PLEASE raise the RCH rates. Without an increase, homes may close, and that is the ugly truth.

Sonja Zandri, Owner of Brookside Rest Home
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