



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Chair Slossberg, Chair Abercrombie, Vice-Chair Coleman, Vice-Chair Stallworth, Ranking Member Markley, Ranking Member Wood, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify on HB 5918, An Act Concerning Private Duty Nursing for Severely Disabled Children.

I fully support the intent of this bill to include private duty nursing as a covered service for severely disabled children under the HUSKY program. Children that suffer from severe disabilities may require routine procedures that demand professional nursing skills. Such procedures include maintaining a tracheostomy, monitoring oxygen levels, body repositioning to prevent secretion buildup in the lungs and pressure sores, and ensuring proper nutrition, which in some cases is only possible through a gastrostomy tube, that also requires continuous observation to prevent infection and skin breakdown.

Governor Malloy and Commissioner Bremby recently announced the Strategic Plan to Rebalance Long-Term Services and Supports. Although the initiative is looking at the long-term care needs of adults with disabilities, the Governor and Commissioner make clear Connecticut must look at a rebalancing plan to expand long-term healthcare services and reduce state spending on institutional care. Amending Connecticut statutes to permit HUSKY to cover private duty nursing for severely disabled children is in direct response to this initiative. The Governor said it best, "We have to find cost-effective ways of providing high-quality care in people's homes — it improves quality of life and reduces expenses for consumers and government." HB 5918 is one way of meeting the Governor's goal.

On a personal note, I want to share with you my point of view from the perspective of someone who knows the importance of a home environment versus an institutional one when facing physical challenges. By imposing the constraint of institutionalization upon severely disabled children, Connecticut not only jeopardizes their rehabilitative progress, it creates yet another barrier in their lives by removing them from the one place true nurturing and love resides, home with their families.

Please pass HB 5918 and provide private nursing to become a covered service under the HUSKY program. Thank you.