



CONNECTICUT HOMEMAKER & COMPANION ASSOCIATION
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**Testimony in Support of Raised Bill Number 244
An Act Increasing Home Care Provider Rates**

Senator Ayala, Representative Serra and members of the Aging Committee, my name is Nancy Trawick-Smith and I am the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the **Connecticut Homemaker and Companion Association**, an association that represents close to 50 homemaker companion agencies from all over the state. I am also the Director of Community Companion and Homemaking Services in Willimantic, a non-profit companion-homemaker agency that provides services to the eleven towns in Eastern Connecticut that surround Willimantic. I am here to testify in support of **Raised Bill number 244 an Act Increasing Home Care Provider Rates**.

The 2012 annual report on the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders stated that of the 14,601 persons who received services through the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, 13,058 received homemaker services and 9,841 received Companion Services. We do meal preparation, laundry, medication reminders, shopping, light housekeeping, supervising the person who cannot be left alone and take clients to medical appointments. Our personal care attendants do all that plus help with personal care, such as bathing, dressing, and feeding. Our staff members probably see the elderly person receiving services more than anyone involved in the home care program. We can be asked to go as infrequently as two to three hours once a week and as often as eight to ten hours every day. The state reimbursement for companions, homemakers, and personal care attendants is \$14.52, \$16.32, and \$18.88 per hour respectively. While gas prices have increased to close to \$4 per gallon, we are not reimbursed for our travel between clients or mileage when at the request of case managers we take clients to medical appointments. We are not reimbursed for training sessions for our employees. Despite the fact that we all try to keep our overhead to a minimum, there is a lot that takes place behind the scenes to keep an agency running smoothly. Scheduling of staff can be a daunting task as well as following all the regulations of the Department of Labor, the Department of Consumer Protection and the Department of Social Services. As you have probably heard from many providers any imperfection in our paperwork or service that is found by a DSS auditor can end up with our having to pay back tens of thousands of dollars to the Department of Social Services. The screening, hiring, supervision and scheduling of staff is very important. So everything- the hourly wage, the travel reimbursement, the workers compensation, liability insurance and the essential overhead- is squeezed into that hourly rate. As you have heard these state rates have not increased in seven years. Meanwhile our minimum wage in 2015 will increase to \$9.00 which is a 9 % increase. There is now a push by the President and the

Governor to increase this to \$10.10. There is only so much you can fit into these rates so we are asking you for a long overdue and necessary rate increase.

I want to thank you for allowing me to testify and will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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