

**Labor and Public Employees Public Hearing**  
**February 27, 2014**  
**Testimony of Andrea Young**  
**In SUPPORT of HB 5257: An Act Concerning Hospital Employees and Hospital**  
**Conversions**

Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak and the members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of House Bill 5257, An Act Concerning Hospital Employees and Hospital Conversions.

My name is Andrea Young and until a few months ago, I worked at Waterbury Hospital in Building Services. This bill is especially important to me because I lost my job due to a contractor change at Waterbury Hospital. I live in Waterbury, and I worked as a Building Service Aide in the Housekeeping department for 35 years. I was an 1199 union delegate and one of the most senior employees at the Hospital.

Over the last 35 years, I saw services subcontracted multiple times. When I started at Waterbury in 1979, I worked directly for the hospital. Then our services were subcontracted out, but we retained our jobs and working conditions. But when the Hospital switched subcontractors from Sodexo to Compass, all dietary, building services and transport employees were forced to re-apply for their jobs and 17 of us were not re-hired by Compass. Most of us were the most senior subcontracted employees.

Changes like this happen a lot at hospitals all across Connecticut and the country. However, there is no regulation or protection for people like us, who have made a career out of serving others.

In 2011, an out-of-state company approached our hospital with an offer to buy it and merge with St. Mary's. We fought that change because there was no guarantee that we would keep our jobs. At the time, the hospital told us it would be forced to close or layoff workers if we didn't accept the deal. After months of fighting for a community benefits agreement that would require the new buyer to protect access

to quality care and keep all the workers, the potential buyers couldn't make the merger work. Strangely enough, our hospital didn't close. In fact, I heard rumor that they were actually in the black this past year.

I am tired of big corporations looking to make a profit in healthcare. Healthcare is about taking care of people who can't take care of themselves. Hospitals should be beholden to people in the community, not to investors who live out of state.

After 35 years working at Waterbury Hospital, I am now forced to look for another job. If something as small as a change in the subcontractor can result in so many long-term employees losing their jobs for no justifiable reason, what stops a big for-profit company from coming in and getting rid of half of the staff? The state must take a stand in protecting good jobs by requiring that any changes at hospitals in this state are subject to stringent oversight when looking to change contractors or sell to a for-profit company.

Community access to care and job protection must be considered when both patient care and quality jobs are on the line. Please support House Bill 5257 to ensure that we have an open and transparent process when a community hospital seeks to sell, merge or make any significant changes to its corporate structure.