



**Testimony of Barbara Simonetta
President, CT Health Care Associates/NUHHCE/AFSCME
Before the Public Health Committee
In Support of SB 35
March 5, 2104**

I am testifying today on behalf of CT Health Care Associates/AFSCME, a union of nurses and other health care employees representing hospitals and providers all over Connecticut. I am testifying in support of SB 35, An Act Concerning Notice of Acquisitions, Joint Ventures and Affiliations of Group Medical Practices. CHCA-AFSCME represents 550 nurses and technical employees at Waterbury Hospital, which is actively pursuing a sale they have called a “joint venture” with Tenet Corporation of Texas.

This bill empowers the state of Connecticut to collect more information on proposed mergers, affiliations and other joint ventures that hospitals and health care providers pursue as they seek to maximize revenue.

The recent entry of out-of-state, for-profit entities attempting to purchase hospitals are a concern as they attempt to control of large sectors of our state's health care industry.

These complex deals should be open to public review in order to let the public and policymakers decide what is in the best interest of the state.

SB 35 is a good start in that process. It should be a starting point for how we ensure that these transformations benefit not only the acquiring entities, but patients, taxpayers and employees.

It is important that we enact transparency measures like those prescribed in SB 35 before any future affiliations are approved. These out-of-state corporations like Tenet Corporation are attempting to acquire Connecticut hospitals at bargain basement prices, while demanding that caregivers give up their benefits, such as sick time and pensions, and accept cut rate pay to pump up their bottom line.

But what is included in that bottom line for these corporations? Is it multimillion dollar salaries for top officers and people like Tenet's CEO, who is not a healthcare provider but was an investment banker at Merrill Lynch? A CEO who oversees a company that was twice convicted of multimillion dollar Medicare fraud, and was recently sued on new allegations of kickbacks and fraud related now to the Medicaid program?

That's why we need protections like those afforded by SB 35 and more being considered in this legislative session.

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