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S.B. No. 36

**“AN ACT CONCERNING THE GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO
IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE.”**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Welch, and Representative Srinivasan, thank you for considering S.B. No. 36, “*An Act Concerning the Governor's Recommendations to Improve Access to Health Care.*”

For the record, I am State Representative Roberta Willis, representing the 64th District.

I believe that a good clinician needs extensive clinical experience and a rigorous academic background. I also believe that APRNs have both. APRNs have graduate-level degrees, hundreds of clinical hours of supervised practice, and must pass national certification exams. From my personal experience, some of the best care I have ever received was from an APRN. But personal experience does not guide my decision to support this legislation. The decision on expanding APRNs' autonomy to practice must be based on improving access to care and patient health outcomes.

Groups like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have done extensive research on the benefits of APRN care and found that they have equal outcomes on various process and outcome quality-of-care measures when compared to their physician colleagues. While APRNs do not complete a post-graduate residency program, they are well trained to focus on chronic and preventive care management. This legislation's intent is not to turn APRNs into physicians. They are not being given autonomy to make complex diagnostic decisions. We are simply giving them greater freedom to practice in clinical areas within their existing scope of practice. I think it is very important for APRNs and physicians to have productive collaborative relationships, but not supervisory ones. The research indicates that written practice agreements often become a formality that does not foster meaningful interaction between APRNs and physicians.

Nearly 90 percent of APRNs work in primary care. With the influx of new patients into the health care system, there is a great need for expanded primary care services and APRNs play a vital and necessary role in meeting this need. Laws that restrict how and where APRNs practice or how they may be employed only restricts health care services in our state. By improving the APRNs capacity to meet CT's primary health care needs, physicians can focus on more complex health services.

Our health care landscape is changing, we must adapt and work together to meet the needs of people in our state. And I believe that APRNs can play a vital role in the new health care paradigm.

I would like to thank you for your consideration of this bill.