

Testimony of Ginger Nichols, Certified Genetic Counselor
National Society of Genetic Counselors
before the
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Regarding SB no. 437
AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE FOR GENETIC COUNSELORS
Monday, March 17, 2014

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Stillmanand, and distinguished members of the Public Health committee: Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding **Senate Bill 437: An Act Concerning Licensure for Genetic Counselors**.

My name is Ginger Nichols. I am from Sandy Hook, CT. I am a Board Certified Genetic Counselor, and I have been working as a genetic counselor at the University of Connecticut Health Center for more than 13 years.

First, I would like to start by offering my sincere thanks for raising Bill 437; which I am here to support, with amendments. This bill could represents a major step toward ensuring that CT residents are aware of the level of education and training, and professional standards of genetic counselors. Recognition of the professional status of genetic counselors is important for public protection, to help ensure that patients know when they are being counseled by a genetic counselor and when they are not.

Some suggested amendments that I would like to see include:

- 1) Section 3b: Using the established continuing education guidelines as outlined by the National Society of Genetic Counselors.
- 2) Section 4b: Including a time limit for applying through this route.
- 3) Section 5(2): increase the time limit, so that new students actually have time to take the board exams at least twice.
- 4) Section 6(9): removing reference to sections 20-195aa to 20-195dd, inclusive, of the general statutes. These refer to “professional counselors” which, is a different profession than genetic counselors and, therefore; has different training requirements and a different scope of practice.

We will be offering more details on these suggestions to the committee for your consideration and look forward to working with you to address them. Again, I would like to thank you for your time and attention to this matter.