

Testimony of Judy Singer
Public Affairs Chair
Greater Hartford Section National Council of Jewish Women
Connecticut General Assembly Public Health Committee
March 19, 2014

[Raised Senate Bill 460](#), An Act Concerning Hospital Conversions and Other Matters Affecting Hospitals

Thank you Representative Johnson and Senator Gerratana, and members of the Public Health Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the specific language that has been included in Senate Bill 460 to require that a State Certificate of Need (CON) be submitted and approved as part of any hospital conversion, before inpatient or outpatient reproductive services may be terminated by a hospital or other facility or institution operated in the State of Connecticut.

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is supportive of the language included in this bill which protects women's access to full reproductive services from being eliminated or curtailed upon the whim of any for-profit company that purchases a hospital or health care facility or facilities in the state.

Several years ago, the private company, HealthSouth purchased many outpatient surgery centers throughout the state and imposed rules prohibiting physicians who used the operating rooms from performing abortions. Because there is a policy in Connecticut which prohibits any healthcare facility from eliminating a service without official state review of whether the needs of patients in the area can be satisfied without those services, they were forced to retract their newly imposed rules.

The National Council of Jewish Women members throughout the State of Connecticut should not have to worry that in the future they or their daughters or their neighbors will not be able to access the full range of reproductive services provided by hospitals in their areas today. This bill protects against the elimination of services should an outside buyer purchase several health care facilities or hospitals, including Catholic facilities and then opt to accept the restrictions to women's healthcare imposed by the Catholic Ethical Directives. NCJW respects the right of Catholic Institutions to offer care that

aligns with their values. Usually there has been a choice in most communities and Jewish individuals and others could choose to get care at a hospital where all choices were offered. When mergers become part of hospital and healthcare facility purchases, then it is important that language be included in this bill to preclude the elimination of the full range of women's health care services from becoming part of a deal.

Senate Bill 460 will codify this procedure and prevent these types of situations from occurring. It will then be necessary for any future buyer to publicly request the right to terminate reproductive services and explain why it is necessary to do so.

This bill has many other good components, NCJW is very glad that it contains language which protects women's access to full reproductive health care services throughout the state.

Thank you.