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**Human Services Committee Public Hearing
Testimony, February 20, 2014**

Re: HB 5052: An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services Programs. This bill increases the number of slots in the CT Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities to 100 (formerly 50 slots)

Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Coleman, Representative Stallworth, Senator Markley, Representative Wood and members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Celeste Proulx and I am from Cromwell, CT. Please support programs that provide home and community based services for people of all ages who are facing challenges and need care assistance. Too many disabled persons are inappropriately institutionalized or at risk of inappropriate institutionalization. Such persons could be eligible to receive services that are necessary to meet needs attributable to disabilities.

I am directly impacted by this bill as a person with multiple sclerosis. We know that the state funded home care program for elders is saving money and is an option to help keep people out of nursing homes.

The pilot program, the CT Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities has been a life saver for the 50 individuals living with degenerative neurological disabilities like MS, Parkinson's Disease and early onset Alzheimer's Disease. It is the only option for these individuals to avoid institutionalization.

The CT Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities did not exist when my brother's MS became very debilitating...

My brother, who has MS, has been living in a nursing home for the past 9 and half years. He now receives Medicaid. As a single person with not much family support he was unable to maintain a home and take care of himself. He lived alone in a house that he owned. He made a good living and had money in the bank when he let his cobra medical coverage lapse and could not get it back. He was forced to pay out-of-pocket for his medical needs since he did not qualify to receive any of the financial assistance available. His asset level was ~\$200,000 which included the equity in his house; so he

had to pay out-of-pocket until most of his money was spent. It didn't take long for that to occur when he was hospitalized on two separate occasions.

A program that could have intervened and helped with providing care coordination, home care and supports like the CT Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities probably would have allowed him to keep his house. He could have partially paid for in-home care, but did not agree that he needed it; so he sat on his couch barely able to get up and became a target for mortgage companies, credit card and other agencies because he was cognitively unable understand these offers.

If a program existed at that time, he may have been able to stay in his home; once a power of attorney was awarded. It was very sad to watch the physical and mental deterioration, and because he had no-one to care for him, his sister and brother arranged to sell his house and get him into an assisted living facility at the cost of ~ \$3,000 a month. Even there he did not have the support and assistance necessary to maintain his independence. I feel my brother was a victim of the lack of programs that would have allowed him a better quality of life.

The State of CT Department of Social Services must move forward to provide more comprehensive home care programs for individuals with physical disabilities. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities is one.

Please pass HB 5052, An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services Programs.

Please increase the number of slots in the CT Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities to 100.

Thank you.