

Yvonne Foster, Certified Nursing Assistant

Member, New England Health Care Employees Union, District 1199

Before the Human Services Committee, Thursday, February 20, 2014

Supporting: HB 5051 and HB 5136

**Hello, my name is Yvonne Foster and I live in Bloomfield. I am a member of District 1199 and I work as a Certified Nursing Assistant at the Windsor Rehab and Healthcare, a nursing home in Windsor, CT.**

**I am testifying today on several important bills that will have a real impact on me and the wonderful residents I take care of at my nursing home.**

**I am supporting House Bills 5051 and 5136. It's very important that the big corporations that own and operate most of Connecticut nursing homes should make more financial information available to the public than they do now.**

**My nursing home is part of the Kindred chain, one of the bigger health care corporations in the country. Kindred operates 102 nursing homes, with five in Connecticut. Like a lot of other big nursing home chains, Kindred pays millions of dollars to related party companies for goods and services for its nursing homes in Connecticut.**

**For example, in 2011, the five Kindred nursing homes in Connecticut together paid about \$6.5 million dollars to "People First," a rehab therapy company and to Kindred Healthcare Home Office Costs. Almost all of that came from public Medicaid and Medicare dollars – that means that some of my tax dollars and yours are going to Kindred's corporate headquarters in Kentucky.**

**Every day on the job, nursing home caregivers like me hear that we can't have better staffing because the nursing home is losing money. We get our hours cut or see our co-workers laid off – because the nursing home says they can't afford to do better. And we are always threatened with losing our benefits, or having to pay more for health insurance – again, because the nursing home claims to be in financial difficulties.**

**But how is Kindred Healthcare itself doing? What about all the other related companies – are they making or losing money? Where are our tax dollars going – the money that supposed to go for the care of my residents at Windsor? Right now, we can't get any answers to those questions – all we know is what the Cost Report says about each individual nursing home, not the big company or other related companies.**

**We can only begin to understand the answer to those questions when nursing homes make more big-picture financial information available – so legislators like you, workers like me, and our nursing home residents and their families can make informed decisions about whether these companies are interested in putting resources into providing good care or more concerned about profits for their investors.**

**Thank you for letting me speak on these important bills.**