

TESTIMONY OF TOM FALIK, ON BEHALF OF
THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF HOME CARE REGISTRIES
IN SUPPORT OF HB-6894
AAC A STUDY OF LONG TERM CARE

Good afternoon Senator Flexer, Representative Serra and other members of the Aging Committee. Thank you for the time to testify in **support of HB-6894, AAC A Study of Long Term Care**. My name is Tom Falik, and I am President of the CT Association of Home Care Registries (CAHCR). Our Association is comprised of Referral Registries that provide independent caregivers to CT's elderly and people with disabilities.

As you are aware, CT has a large and growing population of seniors, and a shortage of qualified caregivers for seniors and people with disabilities. Care is provided to seniors in a number of settings, including skilled nursing facilities, long-term care facilities and seniors' homes. For most seniors, the preferred location for care is at home, if possible. This is also the most cost effective method, for both families and the State, to care for seniors, as has been recognized by the State's Money Follows the Person program. We believe that HB-6894 could provide a valuable resource for highlighting the needs in this area. **We also believe that any such study should additionally focus on the availability of caregivers and ways to encourage more people to join the caregiving ranks.**

Within the home care arena, consumers can obtain services from (1) employee-based agencies, (2) independent caregivers that are screened and placed by Referral Registries, either as employees or independent contractors of the consumer, or (3) unregulated and/or "underground" sources such as classified ads, Craigslist, Care.com or other internet sites, but caregivers in this last group are typically unscreened and may be unqualified or worse.

Homecare Registries have existed in CT for over 80 years, and they serve a critically important function in the care of seniors and people with disabilities. They allow **sole proprietor caregivers**, who are in the business of providing care for the elderly and people with disabilities, to find work with individuals needing care. They also allow seniors and people with disabilities to obtain care that may allow them to remain in their homes, but at a **lower cost than employee-based Agencies**.

In recent years, there have been various attempts by our competitors and other to kill the Registry business model. If any such effort were successful, it would clearly reduce the availability of caregivers in CT, as **our independent caregivers typically engage us because they are not willing to work for employee-based agencies or in the "underground" market.**

All members of CAHCR are **registered with the CT Department of Consumer Protection**. Our members pride themselves on being completely legitimate and above-board. We provide a critical alternative to the "underground" sources of caregivers, but at a lower price than employee-based agencies. We have worked actively with the legislature in recent years to enhance legislative oversight of our segment of the homecare industry, including proposing amendments to the Homemaker-Companion Statute, which were passed in 2011 and required, for the first time, that all Registries register with DCP.

We believe that a study of the needs in the area will confirm that **properly regulated, affordable Referral Registries are an important option in the home care spectrum**, and that choice in this area should be maintained and supported. Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I would be glad to take any questions.