Testimony of Tim Conroy, Jr.,
Caroline's Residential Care, East Haven, CT,
East Ridge Residential Care, Meriden, CT,
Haughton Cove Residential Care, Uncasville, CT,
in opposition to
Section 14 of H.B. No. 6846 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS.

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and Members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Tim Conroy, Jr. and I am a residential care home owner and member of the Ct Association of Residential Care Homes. I am here today to testify in opposition to Section 14 of HB6846 which would prohibit residential care homes from receiving fair rent and cap residential care home rates.

My family and I have been in the residential care home industry for over forty years caring for individuals not capable of living independently. We provide cost effective and supervised care to sixty mentally impaired and psychiatric individuals on behalf of the State of Connecticut under the Title 19 Cash Assistance program.

It's important to note, that while we are not a medical facility, like a non-specialized convalescent home, we do however, provide 75-90% of the same services. The average Residential Care Home is being reimbursed at $93 per day versus $228 for a non-specialized convalescent homes.

While $93 is the average, there are many of us providers receiving much less. So, I ask you, where can you live for $93 a day and receive a clean warm bed, three daily home cooked meals, laundry & housekeeping services, medication supervision and cared for?

Mind you, 100% of the population that we care for in our three facilities like most residential care facilities is severely psychiatric and are the most vulnerable people. If it were not for the work of the Residential Care Home's these individuals are most in danger of being lost in the system. Once forgotten, they tend to quickly de-compensate, ending up in hospitals and nursing homes or worse left on the streets.

For the past six years, the State has dramatically frozen and/or reduced funding to our facilities and the industry as a whole. We have been forced to drastically reduce our operating expenses to bare bone levels, however, we are still not capable of keeping up with the costly demands of operating our facilities and caring for those in need. As a result, many of us providers have resorted to exhausting personal funds to operate our facilities, as well as, secure business loans to cover the costs to care for individuals on Title 19!

For instance, in 2012 it was strongly recommended to us by high ranking employees of the Department of Social Services to borrow funds to operate and to make capital improvements to our facility. The underlying decision to go forward with this

commitment was that we were promised we would be fairly and adequately reimbursed to cover the $500,000 investment in capital improvements to the facility. As of this date, we are only being reimbursed at a daily rate of $75.27 per day, compared to our average rate of $66 per day, prior to this investment. This has caused an even greater hardship to operating this facility and caring for those in need.

Members of the Committee, I would like to further express the many difficult situations that are effecting those being cared for and the negative impact to our facilities day-to-day operations as a result of the inadequate and flat funding to Connecticut's Residential Care Homes.

First, the inability to fairly compensate our dedicated employees, those performing the demanding job of caring for our residents, undermines continuity of care. Familiarity is so important when caring for those with mental and psychiatric disabilities. We are losing great employees to the fast food industry due to wages being flat for five years.

In addition, we are constantly bombarded by both municipalities and vendors for the payment of increased property taxes and operating expenses... we cannot keep up with the rapidly rising costs being reimbursed in 2010 dollars. All this, being coupled with the unforeseen cost such as excessive snow removal, is taking its toll on our ability to care for those that otherwise would not be able to care for themselves.

Because of these rate cuts and current inadequate funding, many Residential Care Home providers are now contemplating closing their facilities and selling the real estate. Please for the sake of all Connecticut residents don't let this happen!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tim Conroy, Jr.
43 Preston Avenue
Meriden, CT 06450
(860) 982-3542