

**TESTIMONY OF
RAYMOND G. BALDWIN, JR.
PRESIDENT/CEO OF ST. VINCENT'S SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES
SUBMITTED TO THE
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2015**

**PROPOSED BILL NO. 679, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROPERTY
TAX EXEMPTION FOR NONPROFIT GROUP HOMES**

Good afternoon, my name is Raymond Baldwin Jr., and it is my privilege to serve as President and CEO of SVSN services, a non-profit organization headquartered in Trumbull, CT. I'm here to speak in support of Senate Bill 679.

Imagine you are parents who have a special needs child -- Your son or daughter born without the ability to speak and/or move their arms or legs. You want this child to reach their full potential, to have a life filled with hope, promise, learning and love.

That's what St. Vincent's Special Needs Services has provided for more than 60 years to hundreds of children and adults from more than 33 Connecticut cities and towns. Many of our children and adults have cerebral palsy and multiple complex medical conditions. Most cannot speak... Most cannot walk or move without significant assistance.

St. Vincent's provides residential home care for 66 children and adults in six cities/towns, a State licensed school for 80 special needs students, adult day care for 170 individuals and job placement opportunities for dozens of adults. Our staff lovingly provides a special type of compassionate care to our children and adults, and views their work as a labor of love.

In the past 5 years, our program and many others like ours have received no cost of living increases from the State and as a consequence have struggled to keep our doors open. We provide a wide array of quality services for a very challenged population at 1/2 the cost the State pays for the same services at our State institutions.

Recently the tax assessors in a few cities/towns have interpreted CT State Statute 12-81(7) as allowing their municipalities to tax nonprofit group homes which house people with disabilities. This added financial burden (a loss of \$100K) will, along with other DDS cuts, serve to destroy our safety net for persons with intellectual and physical disabilities. Please correct this misinterpreted Statute by clearly defining nonprofit group homes for persons with disabilities as exempt from municipal real estate taxes by voting for Senate Bill 679.

Thank you.

Raymond G. Baldwin Jr.
President/ CEO St. Vincent's Special Needs



General Assembly

January Session, 2015

Proposed Bill No. 679

LCO No. 2523



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Referred to Committee on PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduced by:
SEN. FASANO, 34th Dist.

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR
NONPROFIT GROUP HOMES.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

- 1 That section 12-81 of the general statutes be amended to explicitly
- 2 exempt from the property tax group homes owned by private
- 3 nonprofit corporations.

Statement of Purpose:

To eliminate confusion regarding tax exemption of group homes
owned by private nonprofit corporations.