Public Hearing Testimony – Proposed H.B. No. 5618
"An Act Concerning Community-based Residential Facilities"

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I wish to thank the Planning and Development Committee Co-Chairs Senator Osten and Representative Miller for the opportunity to address committee members on a bill extremely vital to the Town of Manchester and all Connecticut municipalities, HB 5618. My name is Matthew S. Galligan and I serve as a member of the Town of Manchester's governing body, the Board of Directors. On behalf of countless Manchester residents, I am here today to urge your support of HB 5618 as it attempts to address the issue of community-based sexual offender group homes. In the Fall of 2014, residents of my town were alarmed to learn of the pending placement of such a group home in the Clinton Street area among the many families, single parent homes, and children. Public outrage was stirred, in part, due to the lack of any prior notification before the state moved to place the facility in an area dense with kids.

As government officials, it is one of our most central responsibilities to ensure the public safety. One of the most effective tools we have to protect our residents is the power of information. H.B. 5618 mandates the notification of town officials regarding placement of community-based residential facilities, and thus allows the public ample opportunity to offer comment and argument before firm decisions are made. This bill shines a light of transparency on a process that significantly impacts the environment where our future generations are raised. I have heard the passionate pleas from the residents of Manchester and am here on their behalf to strongly urge your support of this bill and the commonsense solution it represents. If nothing else, it is our duty as elected officials to give due notice to the people we serve when our actions will drastically impact their lives.

This is truly an issue that affects towns across our state and not just Manchester. I ask you to each consider your constituents and the families you represent when discussing this bill and to vote for its ultimate passage. Please ask yourselves a very simple question. Isn't it reasonable for any resident to expect notification before action is taken that can increase the risk element in a community? H.B. 5618 is a right step in the right direction that is certainly a long time coming and we need to get on board. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak and I wish you nothing but the best during your session.

Matthew S. Galligan