

Testimony on Proposed H.B. 6483 "An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Group Home Distribution"

Public hearing 2/13/15

Senator Catherine Osten, Representative Philip J. Miller and members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Carolyn Goodridge from Windsor Locks, and I am testifying in opposition to most of the proposed changes for a task force because the changes would open the door to discrimination against people based on their health status and needs. Most people do not have information on their neighbors when they move into a neighborhood or apartment. Why should people with additional health needs be treated any differently? People identified as having a psychiatric disability are a protected class under the Connecticut constitution and have protections under both state and federal laws. Making their health information public would violate these laws. The State and municipalities would face legal challenges based upon laws such as the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. There is still considerable discrimination (and stigma) against those with psychiatric disabilities due to lack of understanding, and I would not want that lack of knowledge to lead any discussion on sharing of health information.

There are concerns about the costs to towns for additional support to meet citizen's needs, and that is understandable but it should not be cause for invasion of privacy. I support additional training of facility staff if it seems necessary and helpful.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony.

Carolyn Goodridge

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