



PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Public Hearing

March 11, 2015

Written testimony of State Ombudsman, Nancy Shaffer

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Nancy Shaffer and I am the Connecticut State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Per the Older American's Act and CT General Statute 17b-400-417, it is the duty of the State Ombudsman to provide services to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of the residents of skilled nursing facilities, residential care homes and managed residential communities/assisted living facilities. It is the responsibility of the State Ombudsman to also advocate for changes in laws and governmental policies and actions that pertain to the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents with respect to the adequacy of long-term care facilities. Please accept this written testimony regarding:

H.B. No. 5270 AN ACT CONCERNING VIDEO MONITORING OF NONVERBAL NURSING HOME RESIDENTS.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program supports the intent of this proposal and is grateful for the proponent's high regard for elders and disabled individuals and for her commitment to the safety and well-being of Connecticut's nursing home residents.

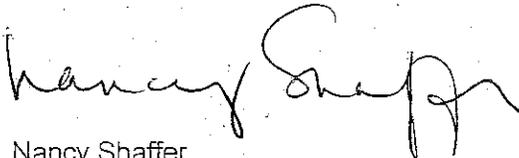
When an individual is living in a nursing home he or she is likely in the most vulnerable condition of their lifetime. Physical and cognitive declines have brought the person to the point where care is required that they no longer are able to provide themselves. Residents depend on a myriad of individuals who come in and out of their home, laundry personnel, dietary staff, therapists, housekeepers, as well as daily caregivers. This home (room) is generally a shared space with another individual. And that person is likewise dependent on others for care to meet their needs and daily services. You can well imagine there are many opportunities for those who may be inclined to do wrong, may do so, and especially if the resident is cognitively impaired or is nonverbal and unable to articulate when they have been abused or when someone has violated their home in some way. This bill requires nursing homes to install video cameras in the rooms of nonverbal residents to ensure their safety. Other states, Texas, New Mexico, Washington and Oklahoma, have passed



similar legislation. And Maryland has adopted administrative guidelines for nursing homes regarding resident/family voluntary use of video monitoring.

The Ombudsman Program developed in the early 1970's because of abuse and neglect of nursing home residents. The foundation of the Program is to monitor and protect the health, well-being and rights of residents. Today, the Connecticut Ombudsman Program receives complaints about abuse and neglect, lost and missing items and theft and other violations of the residents' rights to a safe and secure environment. If a resident or family member wishes to install video monitoring that should be their choice and nursing homes should have policies and procedures in place to do so. The Ombudsman Program along with the Connecticut Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils would be happy to initiate further discussion with all parties, including the nursing home industry, to craft guidelines ensuring the right of the resident and the rights of fellow residents are ensured when video monitoring is installed.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Shaffer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Nancy Shaffer