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**Testimony of Joanne Chapin, RN, President**  
New Milford Nurses, AFT Connecticut Local 5101, AFL-CIO

In Opposition to HB 5448  
***An Act Requiring Health Care Providers to be Vaccinated against Influenza***

Public Health Committee Hearing  
March 4, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Joanne Chapin and I am a staff nurse and President of the New Milford RNs. Two years ago, working in conjunction with the Danbury Nurses' Union, we negotiated an influenza immunization program with Western Connecticut Healthcare Network. This program does not include mandatory immunization, but was centered on mandatory participation.

Every employee in the Network is required to either receive the influenza vaccine or fill out a form declining. If the employee chooses to decline, they are required to wear a mask if within three feet of a patient. The nurses' unions encouraged this program through social media, e-mails and newsletters.

The results have been astonishing. In New Milford in the first year, we had a 100% participation rate with 93% being vaccinated and only 7% declining. In Danbury, the goal of 90% vaccination was achieved.

This program demonstrates how cooperation between Labor and management and a well-organized campaign can be a success. A mandatory program would be very hard pressed to reach the 90% mark.

We are very proud of the success of our influenza vaccination campaign and I believe that it should be used as a state model in other health care settings.

I ask that you not support HB 5448. Thank you.