



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Public Health Committee Public Hearing Testimony March 4, 2015

Testimony In Support Of Proposed House Bill 5904 – An Act Requiring The Establishment Of An Elder Abuse Registry

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Senator Gerratana & Representative Ritter, Vice Chairs Senator Crisco & Representative Riley, Ranking Members Senator Markley & Representative Srinivasan, and the esteemed members of the Committee.

My name is Devin Carney and I am the State Representative for the 23rd District which encompasses Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and coastal Westbrook. I am here today to testify in support of proposed House Bill 5904 – An Act Requiring The Establishment Of An Elder Abuse Registry.

Elder abuse is loosely defined as the willful infliction of physical or mental anguish, neglect, and/or exploitation of a senior (aged 60+) by a caretaker. The rate of elder abuse in the country is alarming – more than nine percent of seniors nationwide will experience some form of abuse. Connecticut, being the seventh oldest state in the nation, is certainly not immune from these deplorable acts. From my own personal experience witnessing it, and I'm sure many others, the concept of elder abuse causes fear for many seniors who have to make the tough choice either hiring an in-home health care aide or going to some form of assisted living. Families are often involved with the decision-making process and can face similar types of anxiety.

Since our populace is living longer, elder abuse has become a larger concern. It is such a national epidemic that President Obama signed the Elder Justice Act to provide resources to educate and prevent elder abuse. Tennessee, though, has taken the step of forming an elder abuse registry, with the goal of preventing those convicted of elder abuse from ever being hired again in a similar setting. One simply goes online and enters the name and/or social security number of a potential employee and it lists the abuser's name, city, specific profession, state agency who reported the abuse, date placed on registry, and reason. Their registry also includes those abused who have an intellectual and/or developmental

disability, which would be a welcome addition to this proposal. Under CGS § 17b-451, it is already mandatory for certain professionals to report elder abuse and it is also required that the Commissioner of Social Services order an evaluation when elder abuse is reported. This proposed registry would simply require the Department to keep a registry of all those found guilty of abuse.

We must effectively combat this epidemic as it only can get worse since Connecticut has a rapidly aging population, which puts more at risk for abuse. An elder abuse registry will protect, prevent, and give peace of mind to seniors and their families. I urge the Public Health Committee in supporting me on this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Devin Carney".

Devin Carney
23rd District State Representative
Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Westbrook