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From: RRGrobe@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, March 02, 2016 4:51 PM
To: HSTestimony
Subject: Testimony for March 3 public hearing on SB 274 and HB 5437

I am writing in support of two bills: SB 274 "An Act Concerning A Study of Streamlining Wheelchair Repairs for Recipients of Medical Assistance" and HB 5437 "An Act Concerning Nonemergency Medical Transportation for Medicaid Recipients."

As Chair of the Farmington Human Relations Commission, a committee of town government, and as Secretary of the Citizens Coalition for Equal Access (CC=A), a grassroots advocacy organization, I am writing to bear witness to the testimony I have heard from dozens of people with disabilities who have consistently struggled with Department of Social Services procedures and policies but who are so severely disabled or logistically constrained that it is hard to come to public hearings at the Legislative Office Building.

My fellow advocates with disabilities tell me that the present DSS system for approving wheelchair repairs for Medicaid reimbursement is dangerously slow and filled with unnecessary bureaucratic hoops to jump through. They regularly experience long delays during which they can be immobilized and bedridden due to problems with their wheelchairs that go unresolved for weeks. SB 274 attempts to address this problem.

With regard to HB 5437, I have been privy to a more than 2- year advocacy process with Logisticare by the Citizens Coalition For Equal Access, among other groups; this process was initiated because of so many complaints about long wait times on the phone, missed appointments due to transportation no-shows or delays, and huge difficulty trying to file complaints about the system. Although the service has improved somewhat, it seems important to continue to hold Logisticare's feet to the fire. We would urge the adoption of HB 5437, and we would urge the DSS to issue an RFP to look for alternative service providers when the current contract with Logisticare expires.

Thank you very much for considering this testimony,
Ruth Grobe, Chair, Farmington Human Relations Commission
Secretary, Citizens Coalition For Equal Access (CC=A)