

TESTIMONY AGAINST RAISED BILL NO. 393

An Act Concerning Domestic Workers

March 8, 2016

Good morning Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, and the other distinguished members of the committee.

My name is Julianne Roth. I am here today as the Board Chair of the CT Homemaker and Companion Association. I am also the founder and owner of Companions for Living, a home care agency in West Hartford.

As I'm sure you are aware, home care is an essential service provided by over 300 companies in Connecticut. Home care allows individuals to remain in their own home by providing an extra pair of hands to assist with activities of daily living. Services are offered to clients with needs ranging from Companionship to Hospice care, and everything in between. Without these services, most of these individuals would be forced to move to a nursing home.

The Connecticut Homemaker and Companion Association supports the rights of our employees. Domestic workers who are employed by third party agencies are required to be paid minimum wage and overtime. Our agencies comply with state and federal laws that include background checks, sleep time, worker's compensation and other insurance, and payroll taxes. The additional requirements proposed in this bill would significantly raise the cost to deliver home care. This will make home care cost prohibitive for many families. More individuals will be forced to move into nursing homes because they are unable to afford the services required for them to remain in their own homes. In turn, this will drive up state spending and cause the elimination of many jobs.

The domestic workers who *would* benefit from the proposed protections are in fact, not employed by agencies. It is the workers who are privately hired by families who are not mandated to have background checks, who are not automatically entitled to overtime, and who may not receive regularly scheduled time off. It is those individual who are more likely to suffer from abuse because they do not have a third party employer protecting them from mistreatment.

This bill segregates domestic workers who are paid for privately versus those who are paid through State of Connecticut programs. It is unreasonable to exclude one group of workers from the benefits described in this bill versus their privately paid counterparts. The work is the same and a double standard is simply unfair and discriminatory. It is also important to note that there are many circumstances where an individual may work part time for both a privately paid client of ours, as well as a state paid program client, thus making the differentiation in pay and benefits unmanageable.

We are not opposed to domestic worker's rights. And we are not in favor of the bill that is proposed. The proposed regulations will hurt the fragile population we serve, and eliminate many jobs of those very individuals whom you are trying to protect.

Thank you for your time and consideration.