

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



JOE ARESIMOWICZ
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Representative Joe Aresimowicz of the 30th District, serving Berlin and Southington. I am testifying in support of HB 5454: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AUTHORITY.

We are seeing a lot of change in the health care industry. Mergers between insurers, between hospitals, and between doctors offices, new health technologies, and new research on best practices are all transforming how consumers access care and the cost they pay for that care. The result is that the way each of us interacts with the health care system now is certainly different than the way care was delivered even just 10 years ago.

Over the past several years, we have heard from our local community hospitals – particularly about their need to have better access to capital so they can make necessary improvements to their facilities, purchase equipment, and upgrade their technology.

In 2004, we authorized the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority to open up additional financing for health care institutions to purchase or install equipment. However, it is my understanding that this opportunity has been seldom, if ever, been taken up by our hospitals.

Last year, as part of SB 811: AN ACT CONCERNING HOSPITALS, INSURERS AND HEALTH CARE CONSUMERS, we asked CHEFA, in consultation with the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and the Office of Health Care Access, to analyze what we can do to improve capital financing opportunities for community hospitals. This year's proposed bill is based on their findings. It expands the number of projects for which this funding can be used, limits the hospitals that have access to the resources to community hospitals, and requires that the unique economic circumstances of hospitals be taken into account when determining eligibility. We recognize that improvements can be made to the drafting of the language and are certainly open to those suggestions.

At the end of the day, this bill is about improving patient care. As part of their research, CHEFA asked the hospitals what they need in terms of capital improvements. Some of the ideas that they heard back included expanding primary care facilities and outpatient centers, updating to electronic medical records, and improvements to their physical plants. I believe these are all areas that we can agree are important to ensure Connecticut residents have access to quality care. I hope to work with this Committee to improve this bill and make sure we help our hospitals access the funding that they need.

Thank you for your consideration.

