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Dear Public Health Committee of Connecticut,

I am writing to request the support of HB 5534 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF NATUROPATHY.

My name is Nicole Klughers, residing in Fairfield and I am incredibly passionate about this concern that I present to you. I am a student at the University of Bridgeport, College of Naturopathic Medicine, the only accredited naturopathic medicine program on the East coast. This May I will graduate with a Doctorate in Naturopathic Medicine and I am eager to stay in Connecticut and practice to my best ability, providing **optimal, cost-efficient and results-based patient care**. Unfortunately, the current scope of practice in Connecticut for naturopathic doctors does not allow for me to do this.

I write to ask your support to allow naturopathic physicians (NDs) the same prescriptive authority consistent with many other states that license NDs.

Before pursuing my career in naturopathic medicine, I earned a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree, allowing me to practice as a pharmacist. I chose to be a naturopathic physician because of the limitations I experienced in the conventional medical model and my passion for integrative and preventative medicine. Practicing naturopathic medicine allows me to utilize holistic assessment and natural therapies in addition to conventional treatments, but only in states that authorize ND prescriptive rights. The majority of states which license NDs allow for this type of practice and I strongly believe that the people of Connecticut State rightfully deserve access to advanced naturopathic care.

I have been thoroughly trained to adequately diagnose a condition but *if the most appropriate treatment is a prescribed medication*, in Connecticut, I will have to refer to a prescribing doctor. This current situation dilutes my ability to provide optimal care for patients, delays treatment, increases costs, and duplicates services. Overall, this process is tedious and inefficient for the patient and the health care system.

Prescriptive authority would also enable the University of Bridgeport, College of Naturopathic Medicine to provide superior clinical training of naturopathic physicians to be prepared for practice in any state. Passage of this law will enable primary care services and improved health outcomes to over 25,000 underserved people seen annually in the *UB Clinics*.

It is time to update the 90-year-old Connecticut law governing the scope of practice of naturopathic medicine. Our limited scope in CT has failed to keep pace with advances made by other states that license NDs. I believe the people of Connecticut deserve a choice and that naturopathic physicians must be able to provide appropriate care to people who choose their services. This update will allow for optimal, cost-efficient and results-based patient care.

Once again, I ask you *to please support providing prescriptive authority to licensed naturopathic physicians (NDs) by supporting HB 5534, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF NATUROPATHY*. I look forward to your support of this bill and appreciate your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Nicole B Klughers, PharmD

N.D. Candidate '16

L.Ac. Candidate '16