Griswold
HOME CARE

Testimony by Cathy Howard

Griswold Home Care/Fairfield County

Opposing House Bill 5368

Good Afternoon members of the Labor Committee. My name is Cathy Howard. I am the owner of the Fairfield County offices of Griswold Home Care, a non- medical homecare company-. We opened our doors as a hybrid form of a registry in March 1991 and are celebrating 25 years of serving the senior community.

What I am even more proud of is our tenure with the CT Home Care for Elders Program. We have been a preferred provider for the most frail indigent elderly since 1998. In those 17 years of assisting this population, I have seen the need for public assistance grow at a very fast pace. People are living much longer than expected and in the process have exhausted their personal funds.

Everyone in this room knows that CT is facing an extremely challenging budgetary process. The Registry Model allows consumers to stretch their homecare dollars and therefore delaying the need for Medicaid assistance. Almost 16 % of CT's population is currently age 65 or over and growing rapidly as most of the baby boomer cohort -has yet to reach age 65.

In the last 25 years I have watched thousands of seniors spend down their funds in an effort to live safely at home and many found themselves with a choice to be institutionalized or go on Title 19 and receive benefits at home. CT is very fortunate that seniors are able to live at home after spending all of their hard earned dollars, but the solvency of this program, along with many other programs are at risk due to our fiscal crisis.

That said, why would we be considering outlawing a business model that has been in existence for 80 years, that has served a critical role in providing affordable homecare to hundreds of thousands of individuals? What we should be doing instead is looking at Florida, California and Pennsylvania. These states have embraced the registry Model and have Registry Statutes which govern this business model as they have found the Registry Model an invaluable resource to affordable homecare solutions for their seniors.

The DOL would like to protect consumers from potential personal injury claims by caregivers. After extensive research we have uncovered -an insurance program that is widely used in many states which provides coverage to a caregiver for an accident while working in a consumer's home. The CT -Insurance Dept. has approved this type of insurance.

I implore this committee to defeat House Bill 5368, and to form a subcommittee to study the economic benefits of the Registry model along with opportunities to utilize the insurance cited above in order to protect consumer choice, reduce an influx of Title 19 applications and avoid the obvious dangerous result of caregiving going underground.