Cheryl Dence
Char-Laine Manor, Inc., Administrator

H.B. No. 7148 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIAL ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services Public Hearing, March 5, 2019

Concerning

Department of Social Services Budget-Residential Care Home Funding

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle, Senator Flexer, Representative Abercombie and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services, my name is Cheryl Dence and I am the owner/administrator at Char-Laine Manor, Inc. and a member of the Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes.

Residential Care Homes serve some of the most vulnerable residents in the state including residents with mental health diagnoses, substance abuse challenges, the elderly and those with health problems although we are not medical facilities. Over the last decade our rates have been consistently capped and even in years when we have seen increases, they have been limited to a percent or two, failing to keep up with inflation.

Our facility has 23 residents. Our current rate is $126 a day per client per day. We went through a very large renovation to bring Char-Laine Manor, Inc. into the future and give residents a homelike atmosphere, with caring staff to meet their needs. We provide 24/7 care EVERY day of the year. Staff come through all kinds of weather, work Holidays, as our residents needs never stop. We provide in house and out of house activities to get clients out into the community and not to look at the same walls every day, they look forward to doing these activities.

Some challenges that our employees face include additional requirements for everyday care. This is because clients are becoming increasingly more challenging than they were in the past. Employees are learning the needs of residents. Employees are always there for the residents to provide them with a home-like feel while providing them with the needed oversight.
Expectations are high with State, families, conservators, case workers, etc. wanting more and more as each year goes by which employees feel they are doing way more when they first took the job and now we are asking more of them and they expect increase in pay, also the economy, prices are not going down, everything is going up.

Inconsistent funding affects all aspects of operating a Residential Care Home. Food, taxes, electricity, workman’s comp, health insurance, etc. go up every year and Residential Care Homes are operating on the same rate for so many years now and some are now starting to close. Where will these residents go if there are no longer Residential Care homes available, more homelessness? I have been brought up in this business for many years, and I am not sure if it is Not Caring what happens or what. I think we all want to care but how are we going to make it happen. We all need to work together to ensure our homes are successful. We strive to provide excellent care for our residents and need funding to pay our employees to ensure that happens.

I urge the committee to acknowledge the impact of the budget on residential care homes, their employees, and some of Connecticut’s most vulnerable residents and unfreeze Residential Care Home rates.

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