Testimony of Karyn Cosgrove  
Owner/President of Fernwood Rest Home, Inc.  
Member of the Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes

H.B. No. 7148 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREOF.  
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 Abercrombie and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services, my name is Karyn Cosgrove and I am an owner, the President of Fernwood Rest Home, 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.

Fernwood was established in 1954. We’re a family owned/operated, 68 bed residential care home. Most of our residents are in their 50’s & 60’s, and have a mental illness diagnosis. We provide: 24 hour supervision, medication supervision, laundry, housekeeping, recreation, and assistance with personal care, assistance with financing, assistance arranging doctor appointments & transportation.

Because of their various medical/mental health, and sometimes history of substance abuse issues our residents have become extremely challenging. But, because we can’t afford to pay our staff wages commensurate with the salaries that highly trained employees want, we are forced to hire people less equipped to meet these challenges. This results in a higher turnover rate, which in turn increases overtime, causes a decrease in staff morale, and effects the continuity of care for our residents.

Our daily rate has been historically low, even as much as $30.00 or more below the mean rate for residential care homes. I can’t remember a time when we didn’t struggle to make ends meet. There are needed repairs that can’t be gotten to; equipment and furnishings that can’t be bought, and raises that can’t be paid.

I strongly 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 the cap on residential care home rates.

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