Testimony of Simona Dhanraj
Assistant Administrator of Westside Manor and a member
of the Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes

H.B. No. 7148 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIIUM 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 Abercrombie and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on
Human Services, my name is Simona Dhanraj and I am the Assistant Administrator at Westside
Manor 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.

As we know, residential care homes house some of the most vulnerable people. Westside
Manor provides 24- hour care to 41 residents. Our staff provides more then just supervision to
our residents. Our employees attend medication training courses to dispense medications to our
residents. Our staff care for many residents that are battling drug and alcohol addictions as well
as many that have mental health diagnosis. Some have medical diagnoses that requires staff to
assist daily with things like personal hygiene care, dressing, ambulation etc..

We are facing day to day struggles in keeping our employees employed for the simple reason of
lack of funds/minimal funds. We have lost valuable staff to other jobs that require less
responsibly and have a higher hourly pay rate. We struggle to hire and keep employees due to
this. Without our homes and employees, most of these residents would find themselves either in
a nursing home which the cost of care is significantly greater or in a homeless shelter. Our
homes and staff provoke a lot more for our population then simple supervision.

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 the cap on
residential care home rates.

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