



CONNECTICUT
LEGAL
RIGHTS
PROJECT, INC.

TESTIMONY OF KATHLEEN FLAHERTY, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CT LEGAL RIGHTS PROJECT, INC.
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
FEBRUARY 25, 2020

In support of: SB 1, HB 5175, AN ACT CONCERNING DIABETES AND HIGH DEDUCTIBLE HEALTH PLANS.

In support of: SB 203, AN ACT REQUIRING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIRS.

In support of: HB 5251, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THIS STATE.

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Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, Senator Kelly, Representative Pavalock-D'Amato and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Kathy Flaherty and I'm the Executive Director of Connecticut Legal Rights Project (CLRP), a statewide non-profit agency that provides legal services to low income adults with serious mental health conditions. CLRP was established in 1990 pursuant to a Consent Order which mandated that the state provide funding for CLRP to protect the civil rights of DMHAS clients who are hospitalized, as well as those clients who are living in the community. I'm also the Co-Chair of the Keep the Promise Coalition (KTP). KTP is a coalition of advocates (people living with mental health conditions, family members, mental health professionals and interested community members) with a vision of a state in which people with mental health conditions are able to live successfully in the community because they have access to housing and other community-based

supports and services that are recovery oriented, person-driven and holistic in their approach to wellness. Lastly, I'm a member of the steering committee of the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance, an alliance of people of all ages with all disabilities who pursue a unified agenda.

SB 1, HB 5175: I have family, friends, and colleagues who face the challenges of living with diabetes. I support the efforts in these bills to limit the monthly costs of insulin and diabetic supplies and I urge the committee to vote favorably on these bills.

SB 203: Wheelchairs provide mobility and freedom. Expanding health insurance coverage for motorized wheelchairs will help to make them more available to people who need them, and enable individuals to participate in community life.

HB 5251: Access to health care should be considered a human right and should not be dependent on one's immigration status. It is concerning that the starting proposal is establishment of a task force rather than a proposal to expand HUSKY to offer some level of coverage to undocumented immigrants. It is critical that membership of the Task Force include those who will be most likely impacted by the recommendations of the task force. The legislature should ensure that the immigrant community is directly represented on the task force by mandating that members of the following immigrants' rights advocacy organizations be appointed: CT Immigrants' Rights Alliance, Make the Road CT, and CT Students for a Dream. The task force should also include representatives from health care advocacy organizations with established ties to the immigrant community, such as CT Voices for Children, Health Equity Solutions, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, and Universal Health Care Foundation.