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Before the Public Health Committee

*In Support of SB 1030 AN ACT CONCERNING LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES with changes.*

Good afternoon Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Stephanie Dacres Dawkins, I live in Hamden, and I've worked at the Regal Care New Haven nursing home as a CNA for 3 years. I come before you today to urge you to pass SB 1030 with changes, so we can improve nursing homes for both the staff and residents.

I love working as a CNA because I enjoy working with people and caring for the elderly. Within my role as a CNA I can see the positive effect my work has on the lives of my residents.

I do feel frustrated though by the staffing levels in my home. We are always short-handed, which results in staff falling behind on our responsibilities and becoming burnt out. One person cannot do the job of three. To expect someone to do that is to set them up for failure. With the way things are currently run by nursing home operators, we are being set up to fail.

Another thing that frustrated me about my work is the lack of PPE for me and my coworkers. We are healthcare workers, and yet we are not treated this way by management or the state. We are not provided with the PPE we need from management. When we are given PPE, we are told to reuse it, even when it is single use. This leaves us vulnerable to not only contracting the virus but potentially giving it to our coworkers or residents.

I support SB 1030 because it would address both short staffing and inadequate PPE in nursing homes. The ratios in SB 1030 are great, although I would increase LPN hours and reduce RN hours. I would also remove the proposal to increase shifts to 12 hours. That will only make burnout amongst staff worse. Furthermore, I think the proposal to mandate nursing homes have a 3 month stockpile of PPE is good, although I would increase that to 6 months.

With these slight additions I think this bill would go a long way in improving nursing homes. Please pass SB 1030 with these changes, not just for nursing home workers like me but for the residents that we care about and care for.

Thank you for your time.