



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE REBECCA MARTINEZ

22ND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4044
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8585
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-8267
FAX: (860) 240-0206
E-MAIL: Rebecca.Martinez@cga.ct.gov

MEMBER

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE

**Testimony of State Representative Rebecca Martinez, 22nd District
in support of**

**HB 5238 An Act Studying Access to Parking
for Home Health Care Service Providers**

**Transportation Committee Public Hearing
Monday, March 2, 2026**

Co-Chair Berger-Girvalo, Co-Chair Cohen, Vice Chair Brown, Vice Chair Lopes, Ranking Member Kennedy, Ranking Member Hwang, and members of the Transportation Committee:

For the record, my name is State Representative Rebecca Martinez. I am here today offering testimony in strong support of House Bill 5238, An Act Studying Access to Parking for Home Healthcare Service Workers.

I have worked in healthcare for 26 years. For the past eight years, I have been a nurse in home healthcare, working both in the field and in the back office. I am here today to speak not only as a legislator, but as someone with decades of firsthand experience providing and supporting care in the community.

I have always been passionate about healthcare worker safety, and in 2023 that commitment was significantly reinforced when my coworker, Joyce Grayson, was killed while doing her job as a home healthcare nurse. Joyce went into a patient's home to provide care — and she never made it out.

We know that assaults on healthcare workers are on the rise nationwide. Healthcare workers are about five times more likely to experience workplace violence than workers in other industries. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, during 2021–2022 there were over 57,000 nonfatal workplace violence incidents across all private industries that required time away from work, job restriction, or transfer. Over 41,000 of those cases (73%) occurred in the healthcare and social assistance sector. That means nearly 42,000 healthcare workers were seriously injured by violence in just two years.

One of the most significant and overlooked barriers to safety is parking. It is often extremely difficult to find legal parking anywhere near a patient's home. Parking rules vary widely from town to town, for example, in Hartford there are weekday parking restrictions, including no parking on Wednesdays, and areas such as Albany Avenue where parking is especially limited.

As a result, nurses and other home healthcare workers are frequently forced to park four, six, or even eight blocks away from a patient's home.

In the field, safety can change in an instant. At any moment, a patient can become threatening or assaultive, or someone in the surrounding area can escalate without warning. There is no security, no backup nearby — just you and your awareness.

Home healthcare workers need to know that if a situation shifts, you can get out quickly. You are always tracking the path back to your car — how far it is, what is between you and it, and how fast you could move if you had to.

While providing care, part of you stays alert, listening for changes in tone, movement, or energy.

When you leave, that vigilance follows you until you are safely back in your vehicle.

This is the reality of field nursing — providing care while always holding an exit plan. Safety is not assumed; it is planned for. The ability to park close should be part of every safety plan.

Another concern raised repeatedly by nurses is the lack of visibility and recognition for home healthcare workers compared to other essential service providers. Companies like Amazon operate clearly marked vehicles. When those vehicles arrive on a street, it is immediately understood who they are and why they are there, and they are far less likely to be ticketed.

Home healthcare workers, however, typically drive unmarked personal vehicles. This often results in parking tickets even while workers are actively providing essential medical care inside a patient's home.

I believe House Bill 5238 should also consider studying an optional placard or permit system for home healthcare workers that wish to have one. Many home healthcare providers wear scrubs, so the moment we step out of our vehicles it is already clear that we are healthcare workers. A placard could provide an additional layer of safety and awareness. If a law enforcement officer notices that a home healthcare worker's vehicle has been parked in a restricted area for an extended period of time, it could prompt awareness, monitoring, or even a welfare check.

At the same time, I want to clearly acknowledge that maybe not all healthcare workers would feel comfortable displaying such identification. Some workers may not be wearing scrubs, may not want to share their profession, or may feel that visibly identifying themselves as healthcare workers could make them more of a target. For those reasons, any placard or permit system should be voluntary, allowing each worker to decide what best supports their personal safety.

Ultimately, House Bill 5238 recognizes an essential truth: safe, accessible parking is not a convenience — it is a safety necessity. Home healthcare workers should be allowed to park in no-parking zones when providing care and during snowstorms. No healthcare worker should have to choose between risking a parking ticket and risking their own safety.

Passing HB 5238 would be a meaningful step toward protecting the workers who care for Connecticut's most vulnerable residents every day and acknowledges that healthcare worker safety must be considered in every aspect of the job — including something as basic as parking.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important legislation. I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 5238.

Respectfully,

State Representative Rebecca Martinez