



CONNECTICUT HOMEMAKER AND COMPANION ASSOCIATION

November 21, 2014

P. O. Box 310824
New Windsor, CT 06131

Good morning Senator Holder-Winfield, Representative Tercyak, and the other distinguished members of the Task Force.

My name is Julianne Roth. I am here today as a board member of the CT Homemaker and Companion Association. I am also the founder and owner of a home care agency in West Hartford.

Home care is an essential service provided by over 300 companies in Connecticut. Home care allows individuals to remain in their own home by providing an extra pair of hands to assist with activities of daily living. Services are offered to clients with needs ranging from Companionship to Hospice care, and everything in between. Without these services, most of these individuals would be forced to move to a nursing home.

The Connecticut Homemaker and Companion Association supports the rights of our employees. As you know the elimination of the Companionship Exemption from the Fair Labor Standards Act takes effect on January 1, 2015. Domestic workers who are employed by third party agencies are required to be paid minimum wage and overtime. Our agencies comply with state and federal laws that include background checks, sleep time, workers compensation and other insurance, and payroll taxes. The additional requirements proposed in last session's Domestic Worker's Bill of Rights would significantly raise the cost to deliver home care, on top of increases that will become effective on January 1st. This will make home care cost prohibitive for many families. More individuals will be forced to move into nursing homes because they are unable to afford the services required for them to remain in their own homes. In turn, this will drive up state spending and cause the elimination of many jobs.

The domestic workers who *would* benefit from the proposed protections are in fact, not employed by agencies. It is those workers who are privately hired by families who are not mandated to have background checks, who are not entitled to minimum wage and overtime, and who may not receive regularly scheduled time off.

It is unreasonable to expect the segment of domestic workers who are paid by one of the State of Connecticut programs (such as the Connecticut Homecare Program for the Elders) to be excluded from the benefits described in the Bill of Rights versus their counterparts who are paid privately. The work is the same and a double standard is simply unfair.

We are not opposed to domestic workers rights. And we are not in favor of the Bill that was proposed in the last session. Our industry cannot afford to have our hands tied with additional regulations at this very complicated time in our industry. Regulations that could potentially hurt the fragile population we serve, and eliminate the jobs of those very individuals who you are trying to protect. Thank you for your time.