



DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2017
TO: Public Health Committee
FROM: Brunilda Ferraj, Director of Policy Research & Organizational Initiatives
RE: S.B. No. 168: An Act Concerning the Department of Developmental Services' Recommendations Regarding Group Home Licensing Visits and H.B. No. 5155: An Act Concerning The Department of Developmental Services' Recommendation Regarding Waiver of Licensing Fees For Private Providers

Good morning Sen. Gerrata, Sen. Somers, Rep. Steinberg, Rep. Srinivasan and members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is Brunilda Ferraj, Director of Policy Research & Organizational Initiatives at the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance. The Alliance is Connecticut's statewide association of community nonprofits. Our members deliver essential services to more than a million people each year and employ almost 14% of Connecticut's workforce.

I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 168 "An Act Concerning the Department of Developmental Services' Recommendations Regarding Group Home Licensing Visits" and House Bill No. 5155 "An Act Concerning the Department of Developmental Services' Recommendation Regarding Waiver of Licensing Fees For Private Providers."

Last year, the General Assembly passed Special Act 17-21, "An Act Establishing a Working Group to Review the Licensure and Certification Process for Certain Nonprofit Community Providers." That statute called for the Office of Policy and Management to convene a working group of multiple state agencies and community providers to participate in a Lean process to streamline and standardize the State's licensure and certification processes.

The recommendations before you are the result of months of collaborative work between the provider community and representatives from OPM, DCF, DDS, DMHAS, and DPH. All stakeholders involved agreed upon and developed these recommendations to lessen the administrative burden on community providers and make available valuable resources to continue serving people in need.

Please support Senate Bill 168 which removes the requirements that at least one half of licensure visits to Community Living Arrangements be unannounced. Instead, this bill will give the DDS Commissioner the discretion to make announced and unannounced visits as needed. Unannounced visits can be an important part of ensuring quality services are being delivered to consumers, but the requirement that one half of all visits be unannounced created a significant burden for providers scrambling to meet inspectors for routine visits with no notice, and is unnecessarily intrusive to the residents of these facilities.

Please support House Bill 5155 which allows the DDS Commissioner to waive the \$50 licensing fee that is required of community providers who operate Community Living Arrangements.

Please also amend the proposed language to remove the requirement that licensure applications be notarized. One of the recommendations of the Licensure and Certification Workgroup was to completely eliminate paper in



the licensure process, but regulations require applications to be notarized.

Finally, please support more of this kind of system change in the future. As directed by SA 17-21, community providers have been involved in this process every step of the way, and our state agency partners have been sincere about the need to change. There are now eight subcommittees of the Licensure and Certification Workgroup with 42 members working on implementing recommendations, and community providers are serving on each one. **Please use this process as a model to address other redundant and inefficient systems within state government in the future.**

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me with questions or for more information.

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