



March 9th, 2010

**Testimony of Jon Clemens, Policy Specialist at CT Nonprofits,
Related to H. B. No. 5430:**

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM OUT-
OF-STATE RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES TO THERAPEUTIC GROUP HOMES IN THE
STATE.**

Senator Doyle, Representative Walker, distinguished members of the Human Services Committee, thank you for your time and attention to the issues before you today. My name is Jon Clemens and I am a Policy Specialist at the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits, the largest trade organization in the state dedicated to nonprofits. I come representing over 500 members, including over 100 who provide services to children.

Today I come to offer CT Nonprofits' qualified support of House Bill 5430. We believe that it is generally in the best interest for Connecticut's children to receive treatment and care close to home. When our youth are served in state they are better able to maintain their existing relationships, and when transitioning into a lower level of care they benefit from established connections that Connecticut providers have with one another; these linkages aid in supporting stability and success. Additionally, serving Connecticut's kids in Connecticut supports our state economy, creating and maintaining jobs.

However, we urge language changes on two points:

- 1) We must stress that such transfers must be done with the best interests of the individual youth in mind. We recommend solid, individualized transition planning be employed. It does not benefit the child or the system to bring kids back wholesale without regard to treatment plans. We ask that language be included that would offer such protections.
- 2) We are opposed to the present language of this bill, as it limits treatment options. This bill would legislate that children would transfer from out-of-state Residential Treatment Center only into one of our state's Therapeutic Group Homes; such language does not take into account the individual needs of the child; it does not recognize that a more or less restrictive level of care may be better suited for them. The reality is that many of those kids currently in care in out-of-state residential facilities have high acuity needs; to better serve them closer to home we need to invest in the development of appropriate high-level residential care in Connecticut. Connecticut's Residential Treatment Centers are an integral piece of our continuum of care and should be an available option to kid's returning to the state. We ask that the language of this bill be changed to allow for the individual, clinical assessment of children and youth that they may be placed in the most appropriate level of care, whatever level that might be.

In closing I ask that you please look upon this bill's requested changes favorably. I invite you to feel free to contact me if I can be of help in answering any questions, or in bringing together a group of providers with whom you could have a dialogue. Thank you.