

Opposition Testimony to Article 8 (Section 4) and Article 10 (Section 2)

Dear Legislators,

My name is Joanne Rich, and I live in Providence. I am writing to share my opposition to Article 8 (Section 4) and Article 10 (Section 2) of the Governor's proposed budget.

Both of my parents passed away in nursing facilities at the end of long illnesses, my mother in 2001 and my father in 2010. I am a supporter of many of the organizations that form the Raising The Bar Coalition, so I know their opposition to these sections is reasonable. But much more importantly, I am someone who had to watch, grieving in advance, as my parents faded from me in institutional care because I was not able to provide the skilled nursing they needed.

Even back then, when the medical industry and insurers did not put as much pressure on staff to accomplish so much in an absurdly short period of time, it was still difficult for the staff to give my parents proper care. It made a big difference that my sister and I were able to be there regularly to spend time with them and help. What we saw then, and must be even more true now, is that unless residents have regular visitors their care may suffer because of staff stress. At best this is a quality of life issue. At worst it can be a life or death issue.

As it is today, I cannot imagine how a staff member would have time to toilet, bathe, dress, and move a resident in the limited time allotted to them-- let alone interact with them as human beings. Also, being on such a tight schedule does not allow front line staff the opportunity to float and periodically check in on residents who may decline rapidly from stable condition to needing more urgent care. Further reducing direct care hours seems practically criminal.

Both Article 8 (Section 4) & Article 10 (Section 2) are bad for resident care. Article 8 (Section 4) will divert money from frontline staff to managers. Article 10 (Section 2) weakens staffing standards by lowering required direct care hours per resident and reducing and waiving penalties.

Please carefully also heed the testimony of others who have more recent and relevant information opposing these two sections of the Governor's budget.

Thank you very much,

Joanne Rich
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