

Hearing on Bill 22-689, the “omnibus Assisted living Residence Improvement and Quality Long
Term Care Act of 2018
Before the District of Columbia City Council
Committee on Health
Chairperson Vincent Gray
June 22, 2018
Presented by
Judith Levy, Coordinator, DC Coalition on Long Term Care

Good morning Chairman Gray and members of the Committee on Health. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Judith Levy, and I am the coordinator of The DC Coalition on Long Term Care, which meets monthly to address issues and problems faced by the District’s network of agencies that provide home and community based services including nursing home, assisted living and home care services.

At this time I would like to provide the history of the current Assisted Living Residence Regulatory Act of 2000. In the late 1990s the Coalition convened a stakeholders group including members of the Department of Health which at that time included Medicaid, providers and advocates. DC residents were faced with going to Maryland because long term care insurance would not cover unlicensed services. It was a very collaborative and successful effort leading to the Assisted Living Residence Regulatory Act of 2000 which was adopted unanimously by the DC Council. The legislative intent, based on city-wide focus groups and two sets of public hearings, was to create a residential alternative to nursing home facilities. The Act embraces a social model distinct from the medical model of skilled nursing home facilities. The Act was based on a philosophy of person-centered care in a residential setting that emphasizes personal dignity, autonomy, independence, privacy and freedom of choice.. Furthermore, it was intended to serve all District residents regardless of income. Implementation of the Assisted Living

Residence Regulatory Act of 2000 was begun in the fall of 2007. The survey tool adopted by the Health Regulation Administration was geared exactly to the sections of the codified Act.

Obviously there is a need to update current regulations to reflect the changes that have occurred in providing services at assisted living facilities and we support that effort. In late 2017, DC Health began an inclusive process of drafting regulations with the goal of improving quality, access and affordability of Assisted living in the District of Columbia. Since then they have convened a stakeholders group to modify the current act which I have participated in as well other advocates and stakeholders. Bill 22-0689 does not take into account the philosophy of the original Act.

Experts at LeadingAge as well as other leaders and advocates in the community have reviewed Bill 22-0689 and believe that as written it will not improve the quality of assisted living or expand access to affordable assisted living options. While there are many issues with the bill I would like to highlight that the Bill:

- Discriminates against those living with cognitive disabilities and terminal illness
- Decrease choice and dignity
- Jeopardize the creation and preservation of affordable assisted living in the District of Columbia
- Creates a competitive disadvantage for the District with its neighboring jurisdictions causing frail seniors to move out of the District.

Chairman Gray, the Long Term Care Coalition requests that you suspend legislative hearings and respect the process currently in place to modify current Regulations. Most important is that DC Health has the resources and support to expeditiously enact these changes. Thank-you for the opportunity to testify.