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I would like to speak in opposition to Section 12 of H.B. 5020 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PUBLIC HEALTH. Residential Care Homes are non-medical models. It is beyond the scope of practice for the staff of these homes to make the necessary assessments to be in compliance with the requirements of these sections. They do not have a clinical record, nor any other mechanism, skills or method to create the necessary documentation to show the problems created by difficult residents. Many of the residents have either dementia or mental illness and on the whole the staff handles the difficult behaviors, verbal abuse, and sometimes physical abuse extremely well.

There have been no increase in cost for these homes for more than five years; these regulations would place an increased cost burden on the homes. At one time there were 200 residential care homes in the state, we now have less than 100. This would push more of the homes to close and where would many of our chronically mentally ill clients live?

Many of the homes have a difficult time finding an appropriate placement for these residents. They receive little help from the resident's case manager or mental health worker. Not because they are not trying to help but because there are limited options for placement.

Finally, and most importantly, this would put other residents of the home at risk. Residents are rarely if ever discharged for no reason. The usual reason residents are discharged is non-payment of bills or their behavior has escalated to a point that the facility can no longer manage the resident.

While I recognize that the purpose of the changes is to protect the rights of the resident, without a more timely discharge their condition will decline because of the need for a different level of care.