Good Afternoon,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on H.611 relative to the licensure of home care services. We appreciate Representative Gregoire’s leadership on this issue. My name is Jake Krilovich and I’m the Director of Legislative and Public Affairs for the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts.

As you will hear repeatedly today, home care services are a vital and growing part of the health care delivery system. They are essential non-medical, companion and homemaking services provided in people’s homes allowing them to age safely in place. Consumers pay for these services privately, or if eligible, can receive them through the Elder Affairs Home Care Program. Yet, Massachusetts remains one of a handful of states without a licensure system for home care services.

For many years, the Home Care Alliance and our members have advocated for home care licensure, as we believe that agencies should be held to a baseline set of standards that would protect consumers and workers. We believe that H. 611 is a framework to do just that, without overburdening providers, and driving consumers to seek services in the unregulated, underground market.

H.611 would direct the Department of Elder Affairs to establish a licensure system to protect consumers by ensuring adequate background checks, minimum standards in consumer service plans, training and competency requirements, liability and workers compensation insurance minimums, and consumer complaint processes.

It is important to note that this legislation is parallel to language that was signed into law in 2017 and instructed the department of public health to establish a licensure process for skilled medical home health services. That language was passed through the budget process.

As the legislature deliberates on licensing home care services, it’s important that we strike a balance between over burdening regulations for these private businesses while protecting those that they serve. If licensure were to impose onerous requirements on agencies, it would raise costs for the agency and thereby the consumer. This would inevitably grow the underground market, which is completely unregulated and poses risks to consumers. That being said, H.611 not only would license home care agencies, but it would license any entity or person who advertises themselves as providing home care services.

Again, we thank the committee for the opportunity to speak on this important legislation and would welcome any questions.