

She can't pay, he won't pay, taxpayers do

By Strat Douthat

Associated Press

NEW BRITAIN — At midlife, a time when many people are reaching the apex of their maturity and personal freedom, Linda Solsbury finds herself trapped in a body that once was a source of joy.

There's no hope she'll ever be free from her wheelchair and the daily indignities suffered by a quadriplegic. But even though she's almost completely paralyzed — unable to speak, chew or swallow and able only to wiggle her right index finger — the 45-year-old former nurse is not without resources.

They aren't financial resources, however.

Solsbury is indigent, despite the fact that three years ago a New London Superior Court jury awarded her \$10 million in compensation.

The problem, as she recently told the Legislature's Public Health Committee in a written statement, is that the man a jury found to be responsible for causing her paralysis in 1985 — Waterford chiropractor Thomas Goulding — had no malpractice insurance.

Goulding took refuge in personal bankruptcy after the 1991 award and has not paid a cent of the award even though he's still in business, Solsbury testified.

Meanwhile, Connecticut taxpayers are spending \$181,000 a year to provide for Solsbury's care at the Hospital for Special Care in New Britain. It's a cost the taxpayers



Linda Solsbury
Victimized twice

shouldn't have to bear, says the former New London resident.

"There should be safeguards in the health care system for consumers like me," she told the legislative committee in support of a bill requiring all Connecticut physicians and chiropractors to carry malpractice insurance.

Spokesmen for the Connecticut State Medical Association and the Connecticut Chiropractic Association say the vast majority of their members already have insurance. Tim Norbek, executive director of the medical association, said his group does not plan to oppose the insurance bill, as it now stands.