



*Advocating for Older Adults of Today and Tomorrow*

## **Connecticut Commission on Aging Responds to Governor's Budget Proposal Regarding Elimination of the Legislative Commissions**

As an independent agency of the General Assembly, the Connecticut Commission on Aging is, of course, very disappointed by the governor's budget proposal.

The recommendation to eliminate the Commission on Aging is especially troubling in these difficult economic times. Our nonpartisan, world-class research work alone provides concrete ways to plan for a brighter future for Connecticut, including saving the state hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Additionally, the Commission on Aging, like most of the other groups the Governor targeted for elimination, provides accountability within state government.

Taxpayers would be ill-served by eliminating an independent agency that actually saves them money, works to improve the quality of their lives, and provides essential accountability. In these regards, our record of achievement and leadership is unparalleled.

The Commission on Aging fills a unique, nonpartisan leadership role within the state. Its functions are not duplicated anywhere within either present or proposed offices of the Executive or Legislative branches of government.

Connecticut has one of the highest populations of older adults in the nation and that population is soaring. In addition to the one million baby boomers, 600,000 people are 60 years of age or older and by 2040, the number of people 85 and older will increase threefold.

Clearly, the Commission's leadership role in helping Connecticut prepare for this unprecedented demographic explosion has never been more critical.

It's worth noting, too, that the Commission is citizen-driven, supported by a small but highly effective and efficient professional staff. Its 17 unpaid Commission members come from communities throughout the state. The extremely modest budget for its state Capitol-based four-person professional staff delivers a sound and wise investment in Connecticut's future.

We will further study the Governor's proposed budget and its impact and continue to work with state legislators (who created us in 1993 and strengthened us in 2005) and the Governor on other aging policy issues with a focus on emerging trends, cost savings and enhanced quality of life.

We feel strongly that any objective assessment of the Commission's performance reveals that it is a low-cost, highly efficient and effective independent agency.

The Commission on Aging needs to be preserved to help lead the state through this challenging time and to prepare for the needs of its soaring older-adult population.

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