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NEWS

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West Haven's Memmott Reappointed to CT Aging Commission By State House of Representatives Minority Leader Lawrence Cafero

HARTFORD—West Haven resident Richard C. Memmott Sr. has been reappointed to a four-year term on the 17-member citizen board of the Connecticut Commission on Aging by state House of Representatives Minority Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr. (R-Norwalk).

Memmott, director of Masonicare Community Services at Masonicare in Wallingford, was first appointed to the non-partisan independent research and public-policy arm of the State Legislature in 2005.

The state Capitol-based commission was created by the General Assembly in 1993 to help policymakers prepare for Connecticut's surging population of older adults. Already the nation's seventh oldest state, its population of residents 65 and older will soar 64 percent by 2030.

Connecticut is also home to one million baby boomers—the oldest of whom are approaching 65 themselves—accounting for nearly one-third of its entire population. Medicaid long-term care expenditures alone already make up approximately 14 percent—or more than \$2 billion—of the overall state budget.

Commission on Aging Executive Director Julia Evans Starr said Memmott's experience helps the agency advise legislators, the governor and other policymakers on how the state can make informed public-policy decisions affecting older adults.

“Dick brings tremendous energy and expertise to the commission as a member of our Legislative Subcommittee and in so many other ways and we're very grateful that Rep. Cafero has reappointed him to a second four-year term,” she said.

Evans Starr noted, however, that the state's current fiscal crisis has prompted Gov. M. Jodi Rell to propose elimination of the commission and the Legislature's Appropriations Committee to recommend a 54 percent budget cut to the agency.

“We are very pleased that a policymaker of Rep. Cafero's stature, who fills such an important role in state budget negotiations, has chosen to reappoint members of the commission, including Mr. Memmott. We are confident this action signals his personal support to keep the agency operating, at full strength, into the future.”

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In his letter confirming Memmott's reappointment, Rep. Cafero said, "I hope that your service in this position will continue to be challenging and satisfying. I know that the talents and expertise you bring to it will continue to be of great value and service to our state and its citizens."

"I feel privileged to serve on a dynamic agency that demonstrates its strategic value to Connecticut by presenting world-class research and making concrete, fiscally responsible recommendations that improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of older adults," Memmott said.

This year alone, the commission identified and pursued up to \$11 million in new, untapped federal funds related to the Money Follows the Person program that will soon begin flowing to the state.

The agency's recommendations to the General Assembly to reform the state's approach to long-term care would have saved Connecticut \$600 million in 2006, according to independent research by the Center on Aging at the UConn Health Center in Farmington.

The commission oversaw research authorized by the General Assembly and conducted by the Center on Aging in 2006. The long-term care infrastructure-change recommendations included in the research are available on the commission's website at www.cga.ct.gov/coa.

In addition to its 17 unpaid volunteer board members and four-person professional staff, the commission's 16 ex officio members include eight legislators and representatives of key Executive Branch agencies.

In carrying out its mission, the commission leads public/private-sector efforts to promote and improve public-policy on older adult issues including health care, long-term care, transportation, financial security, housing, employment, legal assistance and many others.

The agency fills a unique role within state government by building bridges, opening dialogue and seeking solutions between influential groups including the Legislative and Executive branches of state government, local government, the business community, state and local organizations that serve critical needs of older citizens and statewide public/private sector coalitions such as the Connecticut Elder Action Network and Connecticut Long-Term Care Advisory Council.

