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4D THE SUNDAY REPUBLICAN LPVW

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COMMISSION ON AGING SAVES TAXPAYERS HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS

As a member of the state Commission on Aging and director of the Sullivan Senior Center in Torrington, I find Gov. M. Jodi Rell's proposal to eliminate the commission as part of her budget-cutting exercise extremely short-sighted.

The recommendation is especially troubling in these difficult economic times. The commission's nonpartisan, world-class research work alone provides concrete ways to plan for a brighter future for Connecticut, including saving the state hundreds of millions annually by rebalancing the long-term-care system.

Taxpayers would be ill served by the elimination of an agency that actually saves them money while working to improve the quality of their lives.

In both these regards, the commission's record of achievement and leadership as an independent agency of the legislature is unparalleled.

The commission's functions are not duplicated anywhere within state government.

Connecticut has one of the highest populations of older adults in the nation, and that population is soaring.

In addition to the 1 million baby boomers, 600,000 people are 60 or older and by 2040, the number of people 85 and older will increase threefold. Clearly, the commission's role in helping Connecticut prepare for this unprecedented demographic explosion is more critical than ever.

The commission has been instrumental in helping tens of thousands of older adults and people with disabilities lead better lives through its leadership in long-term-care initiatives, ConnPACE, the Money Follows the Person program, nutrition, transportation and many others.

The commission is citizen-driven and is supported by a small but highly effective and efficient professional staff. Its 17 unpaid commissioners come from communities throughout the state.

The extremely small budget for its Capitol-based four-person staff, hardly a blip on the radar screen in view of the state's overall \$18 billion-plus budget, delivers a sound and wise investment in Connecticut's future.

The commission has provided invaluable expertise since 1993. It has created a road map for the future, and the legislature must ensure it is allowed to continue its critical work on behalf of the older adults.

Nancy Sullivan Hodkoski
Goshen

KEEP BAN AGAINST SUNDAY LIQUOR SALES

Don't drop the 1933 Blue Law against Sunday liquor sales.

This would hurt mom-and-pop owners by forcing them to be open on Sunday in order to compete and hurt their family day Sunday.

Samuel Longo
Southington

PHOTOGRAPH OF DEAD RACCOON WAS OVERKILL

Your Local News section reached a new low Feb. 10 by printing two pictures of a dying raccoon as news, in full color, plus one after it died. The death photograph shows the animal being held by the tail and plunged body first into a black garbage bag. I had just finished dinner after a long day at work and sat down to read the newspaper. Your photos and almost cheery text regarding "Rocky Raccoon" turned my stomach.

If you needed to report this Torrington raccoon situation in the newspaper, a short sentence or two of text was all that was necessary. No graphic photographs were needed. This displays extremely poor taste.

Kimberley A. Dumouchel
Woicott

BLUMENTHAL MESSING WITH AT&T'S PLANS

It is interesting to note Attorney General Richard Blumenthal is trying to block AT&T from transferring personnel from Connecticut to Michigan, where it has a more advanced infrastructure.

If successful, he will send a horrible message to any new or existing potential employer considering temporary expansion in Connecticut.

This could adversely affect AT&T's plans to expand its other services in Connecticut, such as television, a service I'm looking forward to receiving.

Theodore H. Martland
Woodbury