

# CTOPINION

## YOUR LETTERS

### Cutting Agency Would Be Unwise

Peter B. Pach [Editorial Reporter, May 31, "Narrow Interests Crowd Out Sense Of Sharing"] is correct that those who ask for state tax money should also be mindful of Connecticut's budget crisis. The Connecticut Commission on Aging, an independent, nonpartisan research and public policy agency of the General Assembly, is targeted for elimination in the governor's budget.

The Courant has editorialized that it supports this recommendation — without first having examined whether it makes fiscal sense.

In short, it doesn't.

Last week alone, the commission flagged an executive branch administrative oversight that, if not corrected, would cost Connecticut \$11 million in new federal funds. We're working with legislative leaders and the agency involved to fix the problem.

In collaboration with the Center on Aging at the UConn Health Center, we have presented sound recommendations that can save Connecticut \$600 million

per year by channeling funds to home- and community-based care.

Mr. Pach says visitors to The Courant's editorial board plead for state funding. Some believe it's not their "concern" to help the state save money.

If we met the editors, we'd say that as a state-funded agency, our mandate includes being prudent and proactive stewards of the taxpayers' money while enhancing the quality of life for older adults. And we'd provide concrete, real-world examples.

The commission has a total staff of four. We are blessed with an experienced, engaged and unpaid volunteer board of 17 people from communities all across Connecticut. We have presented a plan to cut our lean budget by 20 percent and have adopted the legislature's results-based accountability initiative.

Based on the millions of dollars in real and potential savings we have identified alone, our return-on-investment would be the envy of any organization in the public or private sector.

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