

Patricia Burns  
7 Camelot Drive  
Enfield, CT 06082  
(860) 749-6949

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Dear Distinguished Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you to show my support for funding Senate Bill 1226, An Act Establishing A Fall Prevention Program.

I am a 32 year resident of Enfield, have been a member of the Enfield Senior Center for 2 years and have never had a fall. Although I've never fallen, I understand the consequences of a fall. Over the years I have known and heard of many people that have fallen in our community. Some of those were lucky and had no injuries and some had to go to the hospital for their injuries. I knew I had to do something to keep from falling, but was not sure where to go and what to do. Then I saw an advertisement in the senior center newsletter for a 5-week fall prevention class called "Keep Your Composure" and I enrolled immediately.

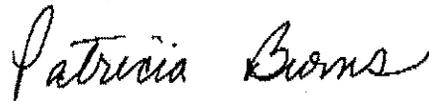
What the fall prevention class did for me:

1. Over the years I have felt myself getting out of shape and felt that my muscles had gotten weak. The fall prevention class taught me that having weak legs could lead to falling down. My hope was that I could learn in the class about how to strengthen my muscles. I learned that I needed to keep my muscles strong and to start an ongoing exercise routine. Our instructor, Susan Gouin, the Health & Fitness Coordinator at the senior center, showed us exercises to do at home and even brought us into the fitness room at the senior center to show us the equipment and to show us how easy it is to use. I was surprised to see how easy it was and signed up to join. Once I joined Susan set up an exercise program just for me. I've now been a member for 3 months and I am more flexible, stronger, and have more energy. Now that my legs feel strong I am able to take longer walks.
2. For some time my balance had been poor and seemed to be getting worse with my advancing arthritis in both knees. I learned that poor balance is a major risk factor for falling down. In class, we were given balance exercise handouts. We were taught how to do the exercises in class and I continued the exercises at home. The exercises have 5 levels and I have reached all 5 levels. Each time I am ready to go on to the next level all I had to do is call Susan and she mails me the next level. These exercises even eased the pain in my knees, strengthened my muscles and helped my balance.

I am an example of how the fall prevention programming at the Enfield Senior Center can help an older adult. If it was not for the senior center working with the Connecticut Collaboration for Fall Prevention, Yale University and UConn School of Medicine I would not have the strength and balance that I have today. I know that it has and will help others in Enfield and could help everyone in the State of Connecticut. This programming will help people to stay focused on their physical health and safety by learning the risk factors of falling. Everything I have learned about fall prevention has enabled me to stay independent and to keep up my activities of daily living. I hope that the fall prevention programming will be funded so that everyone in Connecticut has the same opportunity that I have had to learn about fall prevention.

Thank you again for this opportunity to tell you my story and to show my support for funding of SB 1226. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Burns". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Patricia Burns