

**Testimony on SB 561
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Good Morning, I am here to testify on 561 "An Act Concerning the Money Follows the Person Project and Establishment of a Long Term Care Trust Fund" I am in favor of the creation of such a trust to expand and prolong the reach of MFTP; however, I believe it needs to be amended to provide adequate funding for the mandate on Centers for Independent Living and Area Agencies on Aging.

The MFTP is a federal grant project which is designed to further rebalance our State's long term care system towards more community and home based care that promotes the self autonomy and choices of our citizen consumers and helps to keep our families intact in our communities. Connecticut's five Centers for Independent Living and our state association, CACIL, have been the central players in our State's 6-year experiment with the Nursing Facility Transition Project. As you know, the NFTP has been successful at transitioning almost 200 persons out of nursing homes and providing options counseling to many more people who expressed a desire to leave a nursing facility. In the process, the State and CMS have determined that the Project has saved the State almost 7 million dollars in Medicaid expenditures.

But there is much, much more to be done. Under the new Money Follows the Person Project, Connecticut's five CILs will be joined by Connecticut's five Area Agencies on Aging to continue transitions from nursing homes and to create more options for community based care and living. The current grant calls for us to have responsibility for transitioning 700 persons. This is a more ambitious plan than that contemplated by the NFTP. There are more resources available to us to expand the number of Transition Coordinators and Housing Coordinators and other resources to provide more solutions to the barriers that exist to prevent people from making that transition. However, there are not enough funds to set our goal

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at 5,000. Is there a need for a goal of 5,000? Probably yes. Can we do it with the resources we have? No we cannot. Is it safe to attempt to increase the number of transitions without additional resources? No it is not.

One solution may be to modify this enabling legislation to allow for some of the long term care trust funds to be expended to support additional resources at Centers for Independent Living and Area Agencies on Aging to expand not only the number of transitions; but also to provide resources for more services and programs to divert people from going into the nursing facilities in the first place.

With proper planning, training, and adequate resources, we can rebalance our long-term care system, and increase the quality of life for many of our elderly and disabled citizens. Thank you for hearing us.