

# The Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers For the Aging

## Testimony to the Appropriations Committee Regarding the Governor's Proposed Budget FY 2010 - FY2011 The Department of Economic and Community Development

Presented by Mag Morelli, President

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Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the president of the Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers for the Aging (CANPFA), an organization of over 150 non-profit providers of aging services representing the full continuum of long term care, including affordable senior housing.

**I am here tonight to speak in support of reinstating the \$1.7 million in funding for the Tax Abatement Grant program for nonprofit-sponsored affordable housing as a permanent line item in the state budget.** While we are very grateful that the abatement funding has been restored through the end of the current fiscal year, we urge you to place the funding into the budget for FY 2010 - FY2011. Three of CANPFA's housing members providing a total of 673 units of affordable senior housing would be affected by the loss of these funds. These non-profit providers, Immanuel House in Hartford, Towers One/Tower East in New Haven, and King's Daughters and Sons Housing in Norwalk, will be asked to absorb tax payments of in the tens of thousands of dollars - and they may not be able to do so.

This cut to non-profit senior housing does not make sense from the perspective of the future of aging services in this state. The State of Connecticut has adopted a *Long Term Care Plan* that calls for a *balanced* system of aging services. Hoping to decrease dependence on nursing home care, the state's plan places a priority on providing home-centered care that will allow older adults to remain at home and be supported in the community. **Providing affordable senior housing where seniors can receive the services they need is a key element to any rebalancing plan. Supporting and appropriately funding the needed services that are provided, such as the resident service coordinator program and the affordable assisted living program, is also essential.**

As we move toward making a balanced aging services system a reality, affordable residential options must be made available so that low- and modest- income older adults can indeed remain in the community. Many seniors cannot find decent housing at a cost they can afford, especially if they require adaptations to accommodate physical limitations or services to help them age in place. In fact, efforts to transition people to community-based settings frequently are stymied by the lack of suitable and affordable housing. If the state truly wants to move toward providing a more balanced continuum of long term care, it will need to *invest* in affordable housing alternatives, not cut the funding to our current stock.

Older adults need to have the opportunity to remain in the towns and cities that they have lived in or to be near the families that they love. Passing the buck to the stressed municipalities is not an acceptable answer. The state needs to reinstate these tax abatement funds and demonstrate their commitment to providing affordable community based options for older adults.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

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