

alzheimer's association™

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Written Testimony for the Government Administration and Elections Committee regarding Governor's Bill #840- *An Act Concerning the Elimination of The Office of Consumer Counsel, The Office of the Healthcare Advocate, The Office of Ombudsman for Property Rights, and certain legislative commissions.*

March 16, 2009

By Christy Kovel, Senior Director of Public Policy and Communications.

Good morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone, and distinguished members of the committee. My name is Christy Kovel and I am the Senior Director of Public Policy and Communication for the Connecticut Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association.

I am here today to provide comments about the Connecticut Commission on Aging.

The Alzheimer's Association is a donor supported, non-profit organization serving the needs of families, health care professionals, and those individuals who are affected with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Association provides information and resources, support groups, education and training, and a 24-hour, 7 Day a week Helpline.

The Alzheimer's Association is a member of Long Term Care Advisory Council, which is a diverse group of advocates, providers, and consumers, which is co-chaired by the Commission on Aging. This group provides a collective voice to long-term care issues facing our state. The Commission led the effort to mandate and fund the state's first Long-Term Care Needs Assessment, executed by the University of Connecticut Health Center Center on Aging. The Needs Assessment focused reports have provided valuable data which highlights trends in how our state residents view what services are available for long term care, and what financing options people think are available for these services. The

Needs Assessment data has been shared in multiple forums across the state and several legislators are relying on this data for policy decisions which affect their constituency.

The Alzheimer's Association's 2009 Legislative Platform has an initiative to begin the process of developing a Connecticut Alzheimer's Disease State Plan. This plan would specifically address the range of issues including dementia capable support services for people at all ages and all stages of the disease, quality of long term care, and safety of persons who wander. We have been working in conjunction with the Commission on Aging, Office of Policy and Management, Department of Public Health, and the Department of Social Services and the University of Connecticut Health Center Center on Aging to make sure that our efforts align with the efforts of the state's long term care initiatives. The Commission on Aging has been instrumental in guiding the development of this initiative which will impact approximately 70,000 Connecticut residents who have Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.

The function of this largely "volunteer" commission and its work for the growing elderly population in Connecticut is not replicated anywhere in state government. The elimination of this commission for the elderly population would be detrimental to the planning functions for the aging population in our state. Imagine if Connecticut did not have a plan to help Connecticut progress towards long-term care systems change, or have the research and collaborative efforts to pass Money Follows the Person legislation. We have much work ahead, and the Commission on Aging has been instrumental in the accomplishments achieved thus far.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.