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Government Administration and Elections Committee
Public Hearing March 16, 2009

Testimony in opposition to the elimination of the Commission on Aging – SB840

Senator Slosberg, Representative Spallone, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee;

My name is Deborah Legault and I am a member of the Long Term Care Advisory Council representing personal care assistants who support people with disabilities in the community. I am also a spouse and caregiver for my husband who has a severe disability and uses a wheelchair. I am aware of the difficult economic times for the state of Connecticut and the nation. My testimony today is in opposition to SB840 and eliminating the Commission on Aging. During these hard times elders and people with disabilities need an advocate and a voice in our government. The Commission on Aging has been a very important tool to provide statewide planning efforts, systems change, and a resource for the people and legislators.

I have experienced first hand the great work of the Commission on Aging from my years on the Long Term Care Advisory Council. The commission co-chairs and manages the council and facilitates dialogue among a diverse group of providers, advocates, and consumers. We work together to tackle long-term care issues for elders and people with disabilities. An example of one the accomplishments of the commission in partnership with the Long Term Care Advisory Council includes the development of the Long Term Care Needs Assessment, a planning tool for the future. We have also been instrumental in creating and maintaining the state's Long-Term Care web site, a very important tool to help the citizens of the state to learn about the various programs available.

In my opinion, the elimination of the Commission on Aging would be a large step backwards in the progress we have made to give the elders and people with disabilities of our state a better quality of life.