CONNECTICUT COALITION ON AGING

March 16, 2009

To Members of the Government Administrations and Elections Committee

My name is Helen Raisz, of 118 Waterville Road, Farmington, CT.

I have been a member of the Connecticut Coalition on Aging since its inception (at the behest of former legislator, Ruth Truex) in 1974, and was both the Co-President of the Coalition, and co-chair of its Capitol Corps.

I am disappointed that I cannot testify in person, but I have a class to teach.

I cannot emphasize enough how vital the work of the Commission on Aging and its CEAN network is to the work of the Coalition.

An example of the way in which CEAN (the CT ELDER ACTION NETWORK) and the Commission on Aging have supported the work of the Coalition is the issue of property tax reform. The Coalition surveys older adults on an annual basis. In 2007 the most pressing issue was property tax relief so older adults could remain in their own homes.
As you know, with 169 municipalities this is a very complex issue.
Because the Commission had the professional resources, Commissioner Evans Starr and her superb staff were able to conduct a well thought out survey of every local government, analyze all the programs, prepare and publish a thorough report, and prepare legislative recommendations based on the input of a broad cross section of assessors.

Every year the Coalition sponsors a Forum on the most vital issues facing CT's seniors.
This year with the Commission on Aging as our partner, the forum was devoted to the launching of the study. The event was well attended by almost 200 people, representing all the stakeholders in this critical issue.

This is only one example of the way in which a grassroots group such as ours, with no paid staff, is able to serve our constituents with a professional level of advocacy.

You are well aware that the number of older adults in CT is growing.
Current and future members of that group are very well served by the Commission.
If anything, they deserve an increase in their appropriation, rather than a cut.

Thank you for your attention.