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Testimony on

Raised HB 5298, AN ACT INCREASING THE ASSET LIMITATIONS UNDER THE STATE-FUNDED CONNECTICUT HOME CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY.

Senator Prague, Representative Serra, Senator Gaffey, Representative Bye, Senator Kissel and Representative Frey and distinguished members of the Select Committee on Aging,

My name is Celeste Proulx and I am from Cromwell, CT. I am here today to share my concerns about Raised Bill 5298. Please support programs that provide home and community based services for people of all ages who are facing challenges and need long term care.

I am directly impacted by this bill as both a person with multiple sclerosis and because my brother who also has multiple sclerosis, is age 44 and lives in a nursing home.

I would like to tell you a little more about why I am concerned about these bills. We know that the state funded home care program for elders is saving money and is an option to help keep people out of nursing homes.

The pilot program, the CT Home Care Program for Disabled Adults has been a life saver for the 41 individuals living with degenerative neurological disabilities like MS, Parkinson's disease and early onset Alzheimer's disease. It is allowing these individuals to remain at home and out of nursing homes.

We must preserve the funding for these two programs.

The CT Home Care Program for the Disabled did not exist when my brother's MS became very debilitating...

Over...

Now at age 44, my brother, who has MS has been living in a nursing home for the past 4 years. He now receives Medicaid. As a single person with not much family support he was unable to maintain a home and take care of himself. He lived alone in a house that he owned. He made a good living and had money in the bank when he let his cobra medical coverage lapse and could not get it back. He was forced to personally pay for his medical needs since he did not qualify to receive any of the financial assistance available. His asset level was ~\$200,000 which included the equity in his house; so he would have had to pay out-of-pocket until most of his money was spent. It didn't take long for that to occur when he landed in the hospital on two separate occasions.

A program that could have intervened and helped with providing care coordination, home care and supports like the CT Home Care Program for Disabled Adults probably would have allowed him to keep his house. He could have partially paid for in-home care, but did not agree that he needed it; so he sat on his couch in his own pee and became a target for mortgage companies, credit card and other agencies because he was unable to understand such things.

If a program existed at that time, he may have been able to stay in his home; once a power of attorney was awarded. It was very sad to watch the physical and mental deterioration, and because he had no-one to care for him, his sister and brother arranged to sell his house and get him into an assisted living facility at the cost of ~\$3,000 a month. Even there he did not have the support and assistance necessary to maintain his independence. I feel my brother was a victim of the lack of programs that would have offered him a better quality of life.

Please support programs that provide home and community based services for people of all ages who are facing challenges and need long term care. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Disabled Adults is one option. We must retain funding for the program and also for the state funded Home Care Program for Elders.

As the state implements the Money Follows the Person Program, please keep in mind that my brother cannot be helped initially by MFP, because the existing Medicaid Personal Care Assistance Waiver is not an option. My brother has cognitive impairment that makes it impossible for him to self direct his own care. The State of CT Department of Social Services must move forward to provide more comprehensive home care programs for individuals with physical disabilities who are on Medicaid and who cannot be helped by Connecticut's existing Medicaid waivers.

Thank you.