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**TESTIMONY TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
REGARDING THE COMMISSION ON AGING  
FEBRUARY 11, 2009**

My name is Cathy Ludlum. I work as a consultant, and I am a person with a severe physical disability who uses long-term support services.

Since the year 2000 I have been involved with the Commission on Aging through my work with the Long-Term Care Advisory Council. During that time, I have been consistently impressed with the Commission's leadership role in bringing together diverse stakeholders, and helping them to reach consensus over some very difficult issues. The Commission has been a strong partner in changing the paradigm of long-term care services, broadening the spectrum of supports offered, and recognizing that these services are needed by people of all ages.

While I fully understand the difficult economic realities reflected in the Governor's budget, I was dismayed to hear that the Commission on Aging is targeted for elimination. The impact of this small agency should not be overlooked. The staff and volunteers serving on the Commission and Long-Term Care Advisory Council comprise a network of expertise that cannot easily be replicated.

As we all seek to make government work more efficiently, I urge you not to undo the good work that has already been done. Please find a way to preserve the Commission on Aging so that disparate stakeholders and systems continue to work together for the benefit of all.

Thank you for your consideration.