

**Testimony Submitted to
Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Deficit Mitigation Plan
and the Impact of the Governor's Rescissions
December 09, 2009**

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and members of the Appropriations Committee. I recently became aware of House Bill No. 7005, Public Act No. 09-5, Section 66 that would impose a 15% co-payment on all state-funded care costs. I am writing to you to express my deep concern and to ask that this act be reconsidered and rescinded as soon as the new legislative session convenes.

I understand that in a challenging economy our elected officials are faced with difficult decisions, and a 15% co-pay on these vital services may have seemed like a reasonable compromise in the heat of the recent budget. But, for thousands of vulnerable elderly in state-funded programs, it is not a reasonable compromise – it is an insurmountable financial burden. A financial impossibility that will force elderly and their families to make drastic decisions, resulting in an outrageous cost to the State of Connecticut and an unconscionable cost to seniors.

Seniors are already struggling financially to maintain a life of dignity, health and safety in their own homes. State-funded programs, like the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, not only make this possible but also save the state millions of dollars in long-term care costs. Without these programs permanent institutional placement will become the only option for many elderly.

My mother is a West Hartford senior who attends the Betty Larus Adult Day Health Center at Avery Heights in Hartford. She is unable to stay at home alone during the day and cannot independently afford the cost of adult day care. The center provides a safe, caring environment with services and activities that keep her physically and mentally active and healthy. Without the state-funded component of the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, she would not be able to attend the day center and would face the possibility of leaving her home and being placed in long-term care. The full cost of adult day services is entirely beyond her reach, but even 15% of care costs would be devastating to her already strained finances.

Senator Prague, you have been a tireless advocate for seniors and compromised members of our communities, and I ask you to help us once again. Please do everything in your power to rescind this act – to both ensure the continued well-being of our seniors and to prevent the severe economic impact that this act will have on the state.

Sincerely,

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