



Helping People. Changing Lives.

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**Testimony to Committee on Transportation
Raised Bill No. 1093**

Bristol Community Organization

55 South Street, Bristol CT 06010

Thomas H. Morrow, Executive Director

Daniel Britt, Director of Transportation

I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to testify regarding "An Act Providing Funds for Municipal Matching Grants for Demand-Responsive Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities. Bristol Community Organization, Inc. is a federally designated Community Action Agency serving five towns: Bristol, Burlington, Farmington, Plainville, and Plymouth. As such, BCO provides transportation services to the elderly and disabled in its service area.

BCO fully supports Raised Bill No.1093 because of the desperate need for continued transportation services for the elderly and disabled. BCO's transportation services provide transportation for 392 clients in its service area; a number which continues to grow. BCO's client list and calls for service are on a constant net increase. In 2007 there were approximately 330 clients. For the year ending 2008 BCO has experienced a 16% increase in its client list. This translates to 27,538 rides for year ending in 2008.

Of its client list, 280 clients' ages range between over the age of 54, with 187 clients being over 70 years of age. Of the 27,538 rides provided in 2008, 63 % of the rides, 17,460, were for either medical or nutrition related appointments. Thirteen percent of rides provided in 2008 were for either education or employment reasons, a number which also continues to grow, as BCO is increasingly providing transportation for employed persons with disabilities. The remaining 14 % of rides provided were primarily for quality of life reasons, such as seniors going to the grocery stores, and banks in order to conduct the business of their lives.

BCO's transportation service is the primary form of transportation for most of its clients, and, for some, it is the only form of transportation our clients have. If this bill is not passed, fully half of the rides BCO provides will be cut, allowing only for the most dire and difficult circumstances to permit ride service. In a time when our population is aging, these types of services are in more, not less in demand, and even keeping funding at current levels translates into a net decrease in response vs. demand for transportation services to those who need it most. Again, we thank the committee for this time, and urge that this bill be passed.