



Testimony of

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Committee on Transportation

March 11, 2009

Good morning Chairs DeFronzo, Guerrera, Vice Chairs Duff, Kehoe, Mikutel and to all distinguished members of this committee. My name is Claire Cote and I am the Senior Services Coordinator for the town of Canton, a municipality that currently provides Dial a Ride and Medical Transportation services to its elderly and disabled residents.

I'd like to thank you for allowing me some time to speak in support of Raised S.B.No.1093 "*An Act providing funds for municipal matching grants for demand-responsive transportation for elderly persons and persons with disabilities*".

In 2007 the Connecticut Long-Term Care Planning Committee reported to the general assembly a map for long-term care in the state of Connecticut. This initial report became a jumping board to the beginning of an extensive research project by the University of Connecticut Health Center, with the support of the Commission on Aging, The Long-Term Care Planning Committee and the Long-Term Care Advisory Council. Over 6,000 residents of the state were surveyed; these residents were part of a random sampling and ranged in age and ability and disability. Over 1,000 surveys were also completed by service providers in the state of Connecticut. Survey results were astounding and scary and spurred a great deal of interest in the General Assembly and throughout the state. Projected numbers of Baby Boomers and persons who would like to receive more care in their homes than in institutions are growing and by the year 2030 we will see them rise by an average of over 50%.

Long-term care is no longer just nursing home care. Long-term care planning includes understanding that there is a time and a place for certain services that will allow people to live as independently and in as dignified a fashion as possible. A very important aspect to ensuring independence is access; access to places that promote health, safety and socialization.

The town of Canton is able to provide to its elderly and disabled residents transportation to medical practitioners, shopping centers and the Senior Center within a service area that spreads over a significant part of the Farmington Valley. For persons who are on fixed incomes, the \$.50 that is charged for a ride is feasible. Having our residents able to keep regularly scheduled appointments with a doctor ensures that an elderly or disabled resident has access to diagnostic and preventative medical treatments. This promotes a standard of consistent health that saves the state money; the more people who are seeing their primary health practitioner on a yearly or semi-yearly basis, the less people who are going to the emergency room for standard care.

Another important service that our town is able to provide is demand-responsive medical transportation. Dial A Ride services are great, but there are times when older adults and persons with disabilities must travel outside the service area to medical appointments. In these instances, the town has the ability to set up taxi services for those residents. This service is vital to many residents who have specialized chronic medical needs.

Residents are so very appreciative of the services that are offered. Many of them are unable to drive anymore, and many have either family that is unable to transport them everywhere, or family that does not provide any care for them. There is a whole population of older adults and persons with disabilities throughout the state that would suffer greatly if these funds were taken away. I urge you to continue to support this bill and to support matching grant funds, not only until 2011, but beyond that. Your support of this bill shows your support for your neighbors, co-workers, family members and for your own care, dignity and future independence.

I thank you all for your time. Please feel free to contact my office if you have further questions.