

Testimony of

Elizabeth E. Begley RN, BSN, CHPN
Allied Health Project Director
Capital Workforce Partners

General Administration and Elections Committee
March 17, 2010

RE: Senate Bill 28, An Act Consolidating State Agencies and Eliminating Certain Legislative Commissions - OPPOSE

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone, Senator McLachlan, Representative Hetherington, esteemed members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Elizabeth Begley and I am the Allied Health Project Director at Capital Workforce Partners. Thank you for the opportunity to present today. I do so to ask for your continued support of the Commission on Aging and rejection of Senate Bill 28.

In my role as Allied Health Project Director at Capital Workforce Partners, I have worked extensively with the Commission on Aging in their role as the Chair of the Workforce Development Sub-Committee of Money Follows the Person (MFP). The Commission on Aging has provided guidance and leadership leading to a solid strategic plan that will begin to address the growing direct care workforce need in the State of CT.

The direct-care workforce of approximately 3 million is projected to grow by another million new positions by the year 2016. At approximately 4 million workers, the direct-care workforce will exceed those employed as RNs, teachers, and law enforcement officers. Some estimates report that the direct care workforce in the community will outnumber the facility based direct care worker by two to one. In Connecticut, the Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration projects an increase of more than 9,000 direct-care workers in the next five years. These direct-care workers will care for consumers in the community. It is incumbent upon workforce development experts to recognize that the current landscape is shifting. Mechanisms to recruit, retain, and train direct-care workers to meet consumers' needs is an important part of future workforce initiatives.

The Commission has a small, but dedicated and knowledgeable staff, which works as a team, and provides leadership and direction in bridging state government and community partners in workforce development as well as large scale systems change initiatives like the MFP rebalancing demonstration.

In my occupation as a nurse of more than 20 years, I spent a number of years in long term care management. I have looked to the Commission on Aging as an expert in the area of long term care services and support. Given the rapidly aging demographic in this state it is important that we have vision, direction, and expertise in issues impacting older adults in the form of a Commission on Aging to provide ongoing guidance to our state government.

Thank you for this opportunity.