

January 26, 2011

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## LAWS FOR SENIOR HOUSING UNITS AND SENIOR CENTERS

### A LAW PERTAINING TO SENIOR CENTERS AND SENIOR HOUSING WITHIN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

NO ACT OF THREATENING<sup>1</sup>, BULLYING<sup>2</sup>, ISOLATING<sup>3</sup>, CHARACTER ASSASSINATION<sup>4</sup>, DISCRIMINATION<sup>5</sup>, VERBAL OR MENTAL ABUSE<sup>6</sup>; HARRASSMENT/HUMILIATION<sup>7</sup>; DRUGS/ALCOHOL<sup>8</sup>; BEHAVIORAL; and POLITICS SHALL HAVE ZERO (0) TOLERATION, AND IS SUBJECT TO ARREST, WITHIN SENIOR CENTERS AND SENIOR HOUSING UNITS FROM PAID AND VOLUNTEER STAFF. A MINIMUM FINE OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_ FOR EACH VIOLATION.

<sup>1</sup>**THREATENING**—for instance, at a Board of Director's meeting a member threatened "we ought to take a gun and shoot them both" was stated. This statement is correct. (She did not like what two other directors were saying. Neither the paid Director nor the volunteer President of the Ashford Senior Citizens Organization did anything about it. This can be proved. Members have been threatened to be thrown out of the building for doing nothing at all.) No senior shall be held against their will. The senior shall have the option of having one or more advocates of their choice with him/her. (The President and Director invited the member into the Director's office where both proceeded to shout at her at the same time, and the President physically held the door shut to prevent the member from leaving. State of Connecticut Police were called and spoke with them but no charges were filed.)

No paid or volunteer staff shall point their finger or raise their voice when talking to a senior. (Pointing of the finger is a definite offense in the eyes of law enforcement.)

<sup>2</sup>**BULLYING**—No senior shall not be afraid of entering into any senior center, or housing unit, without confrontation from paid or volunteer staff. No paid or volunteer staff, at anytime, shall make members feel inferior. (A member made a remark and the Director chastised him in front of others instead of taking him away from the group. Someone that lives in housing is harassing and bullying seniors to the point that they are totally afraid of him.)

<sup>3</sup>**ISOLATING**—Paid and volunteer staff shall not support anything, verbally or written, to other seniors to make seniors be excluded from center or housing activities. (Some members have been told not to talk to certain seniors as they were considered "troublemakers.")

*EMERGENCY PHONE CALLS*— The paid staff or volunteer staff shall not have the authority to determine the nature of the call and make the judgment that the call should not be communicated to the member effected. (Currently our senior center, which is a public town building, has a posted notice to turn all cell phones OFF. Not vibrate, OFF. Concurrently, incoming phone calls of importance are not given to members present in the building whether they are emergency or personal. Example: the ambulance was called to one of the member's home for her husband; the code was unresponsive. The wife was taken home by another person that came and got her at the senior center. When everything turned out alright, the member called the senior center to let the people know everything was ok and the paid director would not give the phone to that person. There is no ordinance in town that people have to turn off their cell phones in a public building. This isolates seniors from any contact outside of the senior center once they are in the building.)

<sup>4</sup>**CHARACTER ASSASSINATION**—No paid or volunteer staff shall accuse any senior, whether it be slander or libel, of something that is not true. (There is a problem of paid and volunteer staff issuing untruths about other seniors.)

<sup>5</sup>**DISCRIMINATION**—No senior shall be denied access to any senior center or housing unit. All seniors, whether they are housing or senior center participants, shall be treated equally regardless of their sex, sexual orientation.....

Continually denying seniors opportunities to volunteer. Seniors have a need to contribute to their community to feel worthy. Offers of menial tasks will be unacceptable. (Someone with requisite training to work under TVCCA in the kitchen was denied this opportunity, especially when a search went out for volunteers to staff the kitchen. This person was offered a menial job to sort silverware for the meals instead.) Judgments shall not be made by paid or volunteer staff because of a person's handicap to volunteer for a position. (This handicap person may be quite qualified for this volunteer position.)

*FORMS* required for access to local, regional, state, and federal benefit programs shall be completed and processed in a timely and accurate manner. Help shall be given to the senior involved, if needed, to complete these forms.

No senior participating in any state or federal program shall be informed that he/she can only attend that function and then must leave the building during normal operating hours.

No private organization, or town, shall override the freedom of speech right guaranteed by the Constitution.

3.

**6VERBAL OR MENTAL ABUSE**—No senior shall be ridiculed, scolded, or embarrassed in front of other people and fellow seniors. Paid and volunteer staff shall take the senior aside and discuss the situation away from others. Paid staff shall mediate abuse between participants.

**7HARASSMENT/HUMILIATION**—Seniors shall not be harassed/humiliated/ridiculed in front of others whether by a paid or volunteer staff member. Paid staff shall mediate harassment/humiliation between participants.

**8DRUGS/ALCOHOL**—No paid or volunteer staff shall manage any business of the housing units or senior centers under the influence of drugs or alcohol. That person shall be immediately dismissed of his/her duties.

**(These are areas where I don't know where to put them.)**

**PRIVACY**—No senior shall be subject to withholding of public information because the paid or volunteer staff doesn't particularly like that senior. The Director or volunteer staff member shall make available to all seniors a posted notice, on a bulletin board where all can view) within 24 hours of receiving information of benefits.

Entertainment and travel opportunities shall be prominently displayed. Seniors shall be granted the opportunity to view a sign-up sheet list for any activity in order to make their own independent decisions.

Any resource shall be made public and available instead of being kept hidden from the seniors.

**SUICIDE THREATS**— Any paid or volunteer staff that hears, or has been told, of a situation at the senior center or housing unit, of a senior that verbally states in front of others that he/she wishes to commit suicide shall notify the proper authorities for help for that person. (A senior threatened suicide in front of others and a person with bi-polar told that person to go ahead and do it. Instead of helping the suicidal person the Director brought the bi-polar member into her office and chastised her for making the statement to the suicidal person. The suicidal person was never counseled by the director nor was she sent to another counselor for treatment.)

**BEHAVIORAL POLICY**—If a housing unit or senior center, has in their organizational structure a policy on behavior within the housing unit or senior center, than that policy shall also include the paid or volunteer staff.

**VOLUNTEERING**—In regards to consistently denying seniors opportunities to volunteer; seniors have a need to contribute their community to feel worthy. Offers of

menial tasks will be unacceptable if the senior wishes to volunteer in another area and is qualified to do so.

**POLITICS**—Politics shall never enter into the everyday programming and operations of senior centers and housing.

**CIVIL RIGHTS**—No member of housing or senior centers civil rights shall never be purposely ignored. (When a member follows the by-laws of the senior center or housing unit, and Robert's Rules of Order regarding the presentation of a voting issue by the membership, denial by a committee not to accept a voting issue is believed to be illegal according to Robert's Rules. Revision of the by-laws was to be voted on say the month of October. In September a new by-law was presented, in writing, by a member, according to Robert's Rules of Order. The following month of October, that new by-law was never included in the revision as the by-law's committee chair stated he felt it was not needed. He had no right to make that decision. It was up to the membership to vote either to accept or reject it in the by-laws. The presenter's civil rights were blatantly violated by this action.)

## **HOUSING UNITS**

**SECURITY**—No unauthorized persons shall enter any tenant's apartment without permission when the tenant is away from the apartment. No one shall enter any tenant's apartment without permission when the tenant is away from the apartment and take any articles with them. This shall constitute a felony. (Someone keeps entering apartments and taking medications and personal care articles such as bath powder and papers which include newspapers.)

Authorized entries shall be communicated through the tenants 48 hours prior to each occurrence. Written communication shall state the reason for entry and a copy given to the tenant. In the case of emergencies authorized personnel may enter but shall file a written report within 24 hours of emergency with a copy going to the tenant.

Motion sensor cameras shall be installed in hallways and lobbies of the housing units. (To prevent anyone from tapping on doors and running and also to see who is entering tenant's apartments.)

Tenant's locks shall be changed after each occurrence of a security breach.

**UNNECESSARY PHONE RINGING**—No one shall deliberately phone another tenant to harass them. (Tenants are getting calls around midnight each night and the person hangs up. They feel that it is coming from within the building.)

**STALKING**—No person shall purposefully follow or stalk another person or purposefully frighten another person.

( ) denotes explanation of why this needs to be in the bill