



**Testimony of AARP on
S.B. 2— AAC Air Conditioning in Nursing Homes
February 24, 2011**

AARP is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization with nearly 600,000 Connecticut members. AARP helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP commends the Aging Committee for proposing S.B. 2 and appreciates this opportunity to comment.

We support the objective outlined in S.B. 2 to require Connecticut nursing facilities to install air conditioning in residents' rooms by 2012. It is important that air conditioning be installed in the residents' rooms, not just in the dining area or common space, because residents spend a significant amount of time in their rooms. Air conditioned rooms would give residents the ability to maintain a comfortable temperature even during the hot, humid summer months. But, air conditioning in nursing homes is not just a comfort issue; it is a serious health issue.

Nursing home residents are especially vulnerable to heat-related illness given their underlying health conditions. Many nursing home residents are on medications that compromise the body's natural ability to adjust to extreme heat. Diuretics, for example, which can be prescribed for high blood pressure, prevent the storage of fluids and restrict blood vessels at the skin's surface. Additionally, tranquilizers and medication used to treat residents with Parkinson's disease can disrupt the body's ability to perspire. Less perspiration, in turn, limits the body's ability to cool itself down. Also, chronic conditions including heart disease can restrict the body's natural defenses to extreme heat.

For many nursing home residents, even moderate changes in temperature can aggravate existing health conditions and further complicate their health status. In this respect, the lack of air conditioning in nursing facilities can result in otherwise unnecessary and costly hospitalizations with increased Medicaid costs. AARP believes the air conditioning requirement outlined in S.B. 2 is good public policy that will ensure quality, comfort and safety for nursing home residents in Connecticut. We urge support for S.B. 2. Thank you.