

24 February 2011

Aging Committee
Capitol Building, Room 011
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

I reported a violation in writing in the month of July 2009 to an agency that serves Ashford Senior Center.

In the month of August 2009 during an Executive Board meeting at the Ashford Center attended by volunteer officers and one paid staff member, I was questioned about the letter. Five people, four volunteer officers and one paid staff, interrupted me several times, and I then refused to give an account unless assured I would not be interrupted again. I was not given that assurance and did not continue. Kay Warren also wrote a letter but was not questioned at this meeting. Statement from volunteer board member, "I wouldn't do it again if I was you." Statement from paid staff, "You had better be careful." Statement from volunteer board member, "The only thing you can do is to take a gun and shoot both of them." The staff member did not respond but another volunteer member responded that "we can't do that." (Note is made that I do have the tape of this meeting in a safe place.)

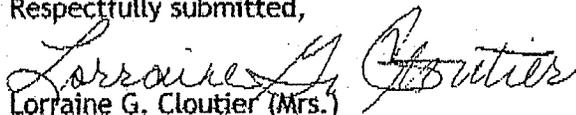
In the month of May 2010 I had the courage to put two additional and unrelated complaints in writing. The paid staff member and volunteer board member called me into the Senior Center Office when I attended the Senior Nutrition Program lunch on May 18, 2010. The paid staff member stood behind her desk, yelling at me and angrily shaking the letters I had written at me. The volunteer board member stood at the side of the desk, yelling at me at the same time. I threw my hands in the air in a gesture of surrender, stated, "I knew better than to come in here," and attempted to leave. The volunteer board member physically held the door shut so that I could not leave. The paid staff member did not attempt to stop her. I tried to exit a second time and the volunteer board member physically held the door shut so that I could not leave. The paid staff member did not attempt to stop her. On the third attempt to leave I yanked the door and opened it, stated, "You can't keep me here against my will," and left. I went home and called the State Police. The officer responded immediately, took my statement, went to the Ashford Senior Center and spoke to them, and returned to my home. The bottom line on the State Police report: "it was determined that there is no criminal violation.

We need laws. Enforceable laws.

I retired in April 2003 and was able to spend a lot of time with my Dad, who passed away in June 2005, just under two weeks shy of his 93rd birthday. He lived in Columbia in his own house, and did not drive. I witnessed several conversations where he was told all things negative - about himself, his children (there were 6 of us, now 5), his late wife (my mother), his in-laws, his career choices, etc., etc. I asked him why he took this verbal abuse. He told me he was afraid if he complained he would no longer be invited to go out to lunch, or have partners to play cards. He had two choices - continue to take this verbal abuse, or speak up and become isolated, with loneliness as his company. He chose the abuse. He feared the isolation, and the loneliness.

No senior should have to make that choice.

Respectfully submitted,


Lorraine G. Cloutier (Mrs.)
362 Squaw Hollow Road
Ashford, Connecticut 06278-1801
860 429-7941
lcloutier@snet.net