February 7, 2011

Senator Edith Prague,

Per our discussion regarding co-sponsoring the Bill we would like proposed to help keep our seniors safe, I would like to offer my concerns. This Bill being introduced is important not only to the senior citizens of Montville but to the region as a whole. I have been involved in numerous projects for the seniors of Montville and Southeastern Connecticut for several years and I have listened to many of their concerns. I am finding that as discussions of a sex offender facility continues here in Montville, many of the elderly are expressing their concerns regarding their safety. Predators are not always selective in their choice of victims. We currently have laws that are geared toward protecting our children from sex offenders and other criminal elements from being within a certain distance from schools and other child safety zones and from certain specific abusers, be it family members or otherwise. As we have discussed, I strongly believe we need to include our elderly population in with those we wish to protect.

As the population of our seniors continues to grow, the number of seniors we need to protect is also going to grow. We need to start thinking not only of their health but also of their safety. We need to establish laws that protect our seniors the same way we protect our children, two of our most vulnerable populations, and this is a great starting point. Establishing boundaries for Senior Centers, Elderly Communities, and congregate areas is essential to their safety. Our Senior Centers in particular have become multifunctional for our elderly. Centers being used solely for social functions are a thing of the past. They are being utilized for nutritional needs, medical assistance, counseling, and are seniors are receiving so many benefits being physical, emotional, mental, social, etc. that our Centers are essential to the overall well-being of our elderly. They have become social service outreach for our elderly communities as well. This bill will help establish a safe zone, an area that our seniors can come to and not worry about their safety. I know you agree this is an essential element for our seniors and I want to continue to work with you to get this much needed Bill in place.

I have been working with our Montville Senior & Social Services Director, Kathleen Doherty-Peck on this issue as well. We have been researching any Bills or Town Ordinances in place for reference. While we have not found much by way of Bills/Ordinances in place, there is substantial evidence of the need. There are horrific accounts of victimization of seniors and we both feel strongly about the need for Montville and Connecticut to put forth the steps needed and help our seniors with this issue. Kathie has spoken to her peers and includes the following letter.

Montville Town Councilor
Billy Caron