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**Testimony in Support of the
Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled
Appropriations Committee Hearing – March 4, 2011**

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Mary Bois, and I am from Kensington, CT. I am 63 years old, and have been living with multiple sclerosis for almost 30 years.

When I was first diagnosed, I was a single parent with three children under the age of ten. I was able to continue working to support my family despite the progression of my symptoms until 1999, when I was forced to retire due to disability. I managed to live independently for a few years, and then moved in with my son and his family.

I am lucky to have a supportive family who help me with my daily care needs, like laundry and climbing up the stairs. But I know others who haven't been so fortunate. Some of my friends with advanced MS would be forced to go to a nursing home if not for the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled.

As a person suffering from MS, I have personally experienced the fear of losing my independence. Currently, my symptoms are mild enough that I can maintain a fairly active lifestyle as a volunteer for the National MS Society, and spend time with my children and grandchildren. But MS is a very unpredictable disease, and I know that an exacerbation of my symptoms could occur at any time. This could leave me unable to care for myself on a daily basis, and I worry about ending up isolated in a nursing home. Knowing that there is a program available that would allow me to remain with my family even if I become incapacitated is incredibly reassuring.

The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled is a life-enhancing program for people between the ages of 18 and 64 with degenerative neurological disabilities. Forty-one people in CT currently use this program to maintain an independent and fulfilling lifestyle. The program allows these people to remain in their own homes or with their families, contributing to the enrichment of their communities.

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The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled not only helps families stay together, but also saves the state money. The average monthly cost of home care for individuals on the program is \$1,433 compared to a cost of \$5,680 if the individual were to be on Medicaid and living in a nursing home. Providing home care to the 41 individuals in the program actually saves the state over \$2 million each year.

Please continue state funding for the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled. Forty-one people depend on this program to keep their families together, and many more on the waiting list also hope to benefit from it. I hope that I can count on you for your support to maintain the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled.

Thank you,
Mary Bois