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Testimony of Attorney Sharon L. Pope  
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**In SUPPORT of SB 297**  
**An Act Concerning an Amendment to Medicaid State Plan**  
**Home and Community Based Programs and Services**

Human Services  
March 8, 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB No. 297. This bill is important to the Elder Law Section of the Connecticut Bar Association. There are approximately 500 members in our section and because SB No. 297 would help many of our clients, the purpose of this testimony is to highlight its significance.

My name is Sharon Pope and I am an attorney whose practice focuses on the elderly, i.e. persons 65 or better, and persons with disabilities. My strength is home and community-based programs. In almost 16 years of practice, I have had only one client who wanted to go to a nursing home and that was to escape living with her daughter. This is not to disparage nursing homes as we have many fine homes and an abundance of dedicated, caring, people working in these homes. However, people want to stay home and homecare costs the State less than if these folks are placed into a nursing home for their care.

In the Governor's budget proposal, the state funded Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, Category 1, would be frozen. The Medicaid waiver program for persons with disabilities under the age of 65 has a waitlist. The Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) waiver is now on a waitlist and the Personal Care Assistant (PCA) waiver is on a waitlist and has been for a couple years. This means that these individuals either go without services or they must seek institutional care.

The Elder Law Section supports SB 297, which would increase the availability of home and community based services for the elderly and for individuals under 65. SB 297 would require DSS to amend its Medicaid state plan under Section 1915(i) of the Social Security Act and give DSS the flexibility to focus on the functional limitation of the person rather than the person's age, diagnosis, condition or disability.

I urge you to support SB 297 because:

- Overwhelmingly, our seniors prefer to age in place and avoid institutionalization. Our

greatest generation deserves no less.

- Likewise our residents with disabilities, under age 65, prefer to receive services in the community and thus avoid institutionalization.
- Providing care in homes and in our communities saves Connecticut money.

Thank you.

