



Testimony to the Aging Committee

Submitted by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

March 13, 2012

Regarding

Senate Bill 374, An Act Increasing Funding and Support for Home and Community-Based Care for the Elderly and Alzheimer's Patients

House Bill 5439, An Act Concerning the Employment Status of Persons Providing Homemaker Services, Companion Services and Homemaker-Home Health Aide Services

Good morning Senator Prague, Representative Serra, and members of the Aging Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the president of LeadingAge Connecticut, a membership organization representing over 130 mission-driven and not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults across the continuum of long term care. (LeadingAge Connecticut was formerly named the *Connecticut Association of Not-for-profit Providers for the Aging or CANPFA.*)

Our members are sponsored by religious, fraternal, community, and municipal organizations that are committed to providing quality care and services to their residents and clients. Our member organizations, many of which have served their communities for generations, are dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging.

On behalf of LeadingAge Connecticut, I would like to submit testimony on two of the bills that are before you today.

Senate Bill 374, An Act Increasing Funding and Support for Home and Community-Based Care for the Elderly and Alzheimer's Patients

LeadingAge Connecticut believes in the principle of ensuring choice for our seniors regardless of where they fall on the continuum of care. And we believe that a strong and balanced continuum of care that provides the right care, in the right place, at the right time will lead to a more efficient and effective care delivery system. It is for these reasons that we support efforts like this to ensure adequate funding sources for community based long term care services.

House Bill 5439, An Act Concerning the Employment Status of Persons Providing Homemaker Services, Companion Services and Homemaker-Home Health Aide Services

LeadingAge Connecticut has not taken a position on this bill which would designate a homemaker-companion agency, registry or homemaker-home health agency as the employer of individuals providing certain services to consumers for the purposes of unemployment compensation, wages and workers' compensation, and remove liability for such individual's personal injuries arising out of and in the course of employment from the consumer. We would, however, like to raise the question of whether this proposal might take away an option for consumers who are seeking to choose the appropriate home and community based service for themselves or a loved one. Ensuring consumer choice within the long term care system is a tenet of the state's long term care plan.

Navigating the options for homemakers, companions, and direct caregivers can be a very confusing process for consumers and we support every effort to make that decision making process easier and more transparent for consumers. Last year the Legislature passed Public Act 11-230, An Act Concerning Homemaker Services and Homemaker-Companion Agencies, which requires homemaker service and homemaker-companion agency registries to notify a consumer within seven days of providing a referral or placement, that he or she may be considered the employer of the homemaker or companion and thus responsible for withholding applicable taxes or making other payments. We supported that legislation because we thought it would serve a vital role in providing consumers with the information needed to make an informed decision regarding employment of long term care workers and caretakers in their homes. It was anticipated that if a consumer did not want to be considered the employer, than they would not agree to such an arrangement with the agency. This law became effective on January 1 of this year and we are not yet aware of its effectiveness.

Please note: An excellent consumer guide entitled, "What Consumers Should Consider When Hiring a Personal Caregiver," was prepared collaboratively by The Home Health Legislative Workgroup of the Connecticut General Assembly and The Connecticut Association for Home Care & Hospice (CAHCH) and can be found on the CAHCH website at www.cahch.org.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this testimony.

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