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Testimony on the Department of Social Services' Budget
Appropriations Committee
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My name is Celeste Proulx and I am from Cromwell, CT. Please support programs that provide home and community based services for people of all ages who are facing challenges and need long term care.

I am directly impacted by this bill as both a person with multiple sclerosis and also because my brother lives in a nursing home at age 48. He also has multiple sclerosis.

I would like to tell you a little more about why I am concerned about these bills. We know that the state funded home care program for elders is saving money and is an option to help keep people out of nursing homes.

The pilot program, the CT Home Care Program for Disabled Adults has been a life saver for the 41 individuals living with degenerative neurological disabilities like MS, Parkinson's Disease and early onset Alzheimer's Disease. It is the only option for these individuals.

We must preserve the funding for this program. The CT Home Care Program for the Disabled did not exist when my brother's MS became very debilitating…

My brother, who has MS has been living in a nursing home for the past 7 and a half years. He now receives Medicaid. As a single person with not much family support he was unable to maintain a home and take care of himself. He lived alone in a house that he owned. He made a good living and had money in the bank when he let his cobra medical coverage lapse and could not get it back. He was forced to pay out-of-pocket for his medical needs since he did not qualify to receive any of the financial assistance available. His asset level was ~$200,000 which included the equity in his house; so he had to pay out-of-pocket until most of his money was spent. It didn't take long for that to occur when he landed in the hospital on two separate occasions.

A program that could have intervened and helped with providing care coordination, home care and supports like the CT Home Care Program for Disabled Adults probably would have allowed him to keep his house. He could have partially paid for in-home care, but did not agree that he needed it; so he sat on his couch barely able to get up and became a target for mortgage companies, credit card and other agencies because

he was unable to understand such things.

If a program existed at that time, he may have been able to stay in his home; once a power of attorney was awarded. It was very sad to watch the physical and mental deterioration, and because he had no-one to care for him, his sister and brother arranged to sell his house and get him into an assisted living facility at the cost of ~ $3,000 a month. Even there he did not have the support and assistance necessary to maintain his independence. I feel my brother was a victim of the lack of programs that would have allowed him a better quality of life.

Please support programs that provide home and community based services for people of all ages who are facing challenges and need long term care. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Disabled Adults is one option. We must retain funding for this program.

The existing Medicaid Personal Care Assistance Waiver would not be an option for my brother because he has cognitive impairment that makes it impossible for him to self direct his own care. The State of CT Department of Social Services must move forward to provide more comprehensive home care programs for individuals with physical disabilities who are on Medicaid and who cannot be helped by Connecticut's existing Medicaid waivers.

Thank you.