

AGING COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY
February 26, 2013

Good Morning Senator Ayala, Representative Serra, and members of the Aging Committee. My name is Jennifer Kyer from the town of West Hartford. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony for today's public hearing.

S.B. No. 837 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT ON AGING.

I support this legislation but recommend that there be a sincere effort to ensure our senior residents are made aware that the new department on aging will be taking over responsibilities previously held by the department of social services. As a registered nurse in Florida I had many patients who falsely believed that because they had Medicaid coverage in their home state of New York they had equal coverage while visiting Florida. Ignorance is not always bliss. Identifying a specific age group would assist residents in contacting the correct agency to receive the assistance they are entitled to. For example to participate in Medicaid's PACE program a consumer must be 55 or older yet 55 would be too young to qualify for other senior programs.

S.B. No. 882 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING ADDING THE PACE PROGRAM TO THE MEDICAID STATE PLAN.

I support this legislation as it is a requirement to access this federal program. Here it is the Commissioner of Social Services who remains responsible for administering these services. Again I point out the danger to our seniors who may not know whether to go to the Department of Aging and or The Department of Social Services for the assistance they are entitled to and need to live.

S.B. No. 883 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A COMMUNITY SPOUSE'S ALLOWABLE ASSETS AND

S.B. No. 884 (RAISED) AN ACT INCREASING ELIGIBILITY FOR HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED CARE FOR ELDERLY PERSONS AND THOSE WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.

I support both of these bills and cherish my memories of many dedicated and self sacrificing patient spouses. It is always a relief to see that in a world drowned by greed true love can and does persist.

S.B. No. 885 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE THE UTILITY OF CREATING A PUBLIC RETIREMENT PLAN.

I oppose this bill due to the current economic conditions, lack of job security for current American citizens, and high unemployment rate. The Department of Labor has the state of Connecticut at 8.6% and Rhode Island at 10.2%. These numbers of course do not include citizens who did not file for

unemployment and are living off their savings while job hunting or citizens who no longer qualify for unemployment. I would appreciate the money and energy to be spent repairing our economy instead of another task force. I do appreciate Governor Malloy's attention to detail in NOT granting business tax incentives for new hires employed less than one year. Too often hiring incentives become firing incentives.

S.B. No. 886 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING AGING IN PLACE.

Concerning Section 1 Subsection b I hope that the unemployed recipients of the supplement nutrition assistance program will retain the ability to provide a potential employer that current hiring tax incentive. I do hope that the Department of Social Services remains mindful of the need to maintain a safe environment for the public, their employees, and those applying for assistance. The December 2011 case of Timothy Grimmer and his family in Texas was a tragic lesson learned.

Concerning Section 2 Subsection f I would prefer that the municipalities were not required to provide matching grant funds. Not all municipalities have the same level of disposable income and thus some would be discriminated against. I support the remainder of this bill.

S.B. No. 938 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PURCHASE OF MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT POLICIES BY QUALIFIED MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES

I support this bill.

H.B. No. 6395 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXPANSION OF A SMALL HOUSE NURSING HOME PILOT PROGRAM.

I support this bill and hope for it's continued success. I admire their decision to maintain a nursing home status. I understand that many seniors enjoy the choice of an assisted living facility, often with home care nursing services. However, when a senior's health declines beyond the scope of home care services they are often not able to return to their assisted living facility. I remember several nursing home patients admitted under those circumstances and often felt badly for them.

H.B. No. 6396 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES.

I support this bill. I enjoyed the information presented during the commission's forum on "Livable Communities for All Ages". Many exciting improvements to our municipalities were presented.

H.B. No. 6461 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PRESUMPTIVE MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CONNECTICUT HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY.

"The commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner on Aging, shall identify funding pursuant to the federal Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended from time to time, that may be allocated to subsidize costs during the presumptive eligibility period for those applicants who are not determined eligible for Medicaid. State costs during the presumptive eligibility period shall be offset by available federal Medicaid reimbursements and savings realized for institutional care that would have been necessary but for the presumptive eligibility system."

I oppose this bill due to these statements. It appears to be expected that some applicants will not to eligible for Medicaid. The admission that the institutional care would have been necessary but yet was avoided for lower level and less safe home care is frightening. I am hoping this language had an assisted living facility resident receiving home care services in mind and not a single senior citizen still living in their life long home. Unfortunately the same legislation applies to a wide variety of home care scenarios.

H.B. No. 3506 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A PILOT PROGRAM TO EXPAND THE DUTIES OF THE STATE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN.

I oppose this bill as additional oversight by the state ombudsman's office is not necessary in home and community based care. The patient acuity level is less than the nursing home, and the patient is able to take their healthcare business to another agency. Homecare and community based health care centers have sufficient oversight from the department of public health, the department of consumer protection, and insurance provided case management; all in addition to the actual health care professionals providing the patient services. I therefore oppose expanding the duties of the state long-term care ombudsman.

H.B. No. 6463 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING AGING.

I support this bill and look forward to the information obtained.

I thank the Aging Committee for this opportunity to participate in our legislative process.

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