Appropriations Committee Public Hearing

2/19/13 RE: 6350
Testimony in Opposition to the Elimination of the Legislative Commission on Aging
Susan Lather, Director of Enfield Senior Center

As the Director of the Enfield Senior Center, Vice President of the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel and an advocate for older adults, I turn to the Commission on Aging for non-partisan, factual information, the latest research and leadership on aging issues.

The Commission on Aging has provided information to the Enfield Commission on Aging, allowing the resident Commission members to formulate their direction based on current data and State initiatives. Julie Evans Starr met with the local Commission to share demographic data and long-term care initiatives and explain the Money Follows the Person program. With that information, this municipal organization can use the trends and data to formulate a plan to better serve the community.

The Livable Communities informational forum, hosted by the Commission on Aging with Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, brought municipalities, State agencies and non-profits together to begin the conversation of how we can work together to address needs. From this forum, the Enfield Commission on Aging has begun plans to start their own Livable Communities discussion, inviting Town officials, Town staff, agencies serving older adults, the Housing Authority and faith communities.

I rely on the objective information provided by the Commission's participation in panel discussions at seminars and forums, through social media, and e-mails. The Commission on Aging can be counted on to synthesize information on current legislation that may impact older adults. These are complex issues that need non-partisan analysis.

Connecticut's aging population is increasing dramatically. As the Director of the Enfield Senior Center, I provide direct services to community older adults. I rely on the Connecticut Commission on Aging for research and public policy information. There is no other agency that can provide the objectivity, leadership and knowledge that I have come to rely on from the Connecticut Commission on Aging.