Testimony of Susan Raggo, Co-chair, National Association of Social Workers-Connecticut Chapter, Committee on Aging, in **Support of the Legislative Commission on Aging (CoA)**:

Appropriations Committee State Agency Budget Presentations: Testimony in Opposition to the Proposed Elimination of the Legislative Commission on Aging: **HB6350**

February 19th, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the committee. I come before you today to advocate **in support of the continuing need for *our* Connecticut Commission on Aging**. The CoA must not be eliminated, as proposed by Gov. Malloy. Nor should any of the other Legislative Commissions be consolidated, as proposed.

The Commission on Aging must continue its work as an independent, nonpartisan research and public policy agency in the legislative branch of state government.

I experienced firsthand the work of the Commission while serving as a social work intern with the state Capitol-based agency, at age 54, in 2005.

As a nonpartisan office of the CT General Assembly, the CoA serves as staff to the legislature—to each of you--as a leader in the field of aging, and as a catalyst for **data-driven policy change**. Connecticut is the 7th oldest state in the nation. The CoA leads public/private-sector efforts to promote public policy reflecting best practices and national trends on complex and ever-evolving multi-faceted aging issues. The Commission on Aging is visionary, but grounded in reality and uses data to develop policy recommendations.

Since my time as a Social Work intern with the commission, I have gone on to work with the aging population in many communities in Connecticut: urban, suburban and rural. I have helped older adults look for housing options, health care, home care workers, food, fuel, legal assistance, transportation, mental health counseling, and caregiver support. Now, at age 61, I better understand the need to define and to create livable communities. I understand the economic realities and challenges of aging in place. The CoA works diligently on these issues—and many more. I highly encourage you to read the CoA's 2012 Results-Based Accountability Report for confirmation of this statement.)

As a Social Worker, I have a responsibility to advocate for my clients. I do this on a daily basis. I urge you to make a commitment to invest in a "long- term care policy" for your constituents, our aging population, our communities and our state. Please keep the Commission on Aging as a nonpartisan agency in the legislative branch of state government.

Thank you.