Testimony

Concerning Commission on Aging

Appropriations Committee

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By

Quincy Abbot

HB 6354 – Opposition to the Elimination of the CT Commission on Aging and Consolidation of the other legislative commissions

Good Afternoon. I am Quincy Abbot of West Hartford. For over 40 years I have been an advocate for people with disabilities, especially those like my daughter with an intellectual disability.

You may wonder why do I oppose the Governor's proposal to eliminate funding for the Commission on Aging?

- Now that I am over 80, Connecticut's programs for those who are aging seem a more immediate concern than they used to! But you don't have to be over 65 to share this concern. You have parents and grandparents and friends today who fit the category or maybe you do yourself. In any event, you too will someday be of an age to benefit from programs for the aging.
- The Commission on Aging does not provide direct services. Rather it is an objective, public policy agency. With today's budget pressures, we need an office which can raise awareness and pursue solutions more than ever to protect the vulnerable, such as those who are aging, and to help all lead more fulfilling lives.
- The U. S. Supreme Court's Olmstead decision in 1998, recognized that the interests of people with disabilities were the same, no matter what their age. Since that time Connecticut's Long Term Care Plan, prepared at the direction of the Legislature, was expanded to cover people with disabilities of all ages. The Commission on Aging has been a **driving force** in the preparation and implementation of that Plan. Younger people with disabilities, as well as those who are elderly, have benefited from this joining of interests.

My conclusion is that a dismantling of the Commission on Aging now would be disastrous to the quality of life for many Connecticut citizens who are aging or disabled.