To: CT General Assembly Appropriations Committee
Submitted by Rebecca Anderson and Elaine Hobart, Co-Chairs
Middletown Elderly Services Provider Group
March 22, 2013

Testimony in Opposition to Eliminating the Connecticut Commission on Aging: Bill No. 6354

We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony to the Appropriations Committee regarding the Governor's recommendation to eliminate the state Commission on Aging. As co-chairs of the Middletown Elderly Services Provider Group, we are deeply involved with programs and services for older adults at the local and state level.

For many years, the Commission on Aging has provided vital non-partisan leadership in research and policy development to address the myriad issues related to the growing aging population in Connecticut. From 2006-2030, the older adult population will increase by 64%. This growth will significantly impact nearly every facet of Connecticut government, including the state budget. It is very troubling that the Governor would consider eliminating the Commission on Aging at a time when the aging population in Connecticut is soaring.

The Commission is the only office in state government responsible for studying and providing research on all matters concerning our growing and diverse population of older adults. It studies and monitors complex issues that affect one million Connecticut baby boomers, older adults and persons of all ages with disabilities. With a budget of only $240,000, the Commission is a very low-cost legislative office that provides oversight and checks and balances, which are critical to state government. It is involved in many major initiatives including the Workforce Development strategic plan for Money Follows the Person, development of the Livable Communities Initiative, Co-Chairs of Money Follows the Person Steering Committee and Co-Chair of the legislatively mandated Long-Term Care Advisory Council.

In his proposal to eliminate the Commission on Aging, the Governor points to the re-establishment of the state Department on Aging. It is implied that the Commission on Aging is redundant, which in fact it is not. The CoA is a policy and research entity, while the Department on Aging is an administrative entity that implements programs within the Executive Branch. For the past twenty years the Legislative Commission on Aging and the Executive Branch State Unit on Aging (now called the State Dept. on Aging) have co-existed. This distinction is clearly understood and the two entities have complemented each other and strengthened Connecticut's ability to respond to the needs of its aging population.

We strongly believe that retaining an independent, cost-effective Commission focused on policy and research is essential to the State of Connecticut's ability to meet the needs of its current and future aging population. Therefore, we ask that you please reject the Governor's recommendation and enable the Commission on Aging to continue its critically important work.

Thank you.