Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging Representing:
Agency on Aging of South Central CT
North Central Area Agency on Aging
Western CT Area Agency on Aging
Senior Resources - Agency on Aging Eastern CT
Southwestern CT Agency on Aging

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
March 22, 2013

In OPPOSITION to HB 6354, Section 90

In Support of the Commission on Aging

The Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A) would like to express our concern about the proposed elimination of the Commission on Aging as the Commission plays a critical role in the strategic identification and coordination of Connecticut's resources to support older adults, soon to comprise a third of Connecticut's population. C4A is in a unique position to understand the import of the Commission's work as we represent Connecticut's designated agencies responsible for assessing the needs and implementing services to meet the needs of older adults. Eliminating the Commission would leave a void in the research and analysis so critical to the State's planning and rebalancing efforts, information which not only C4A but countless agencies, legislators, and the Governor have come to strategically rely upon.

The Commission works with the University of Connecticut and nationally renowned experts to research and synthesize complex issues related to aging challenges faced in local communities and through State and federal policies. It has authored, partnered or coordinated position papers and research that provide the foundation for many of the policy strategies evident in the State's Medicaid programs, including Money Follows the Person and the Complex Care/Dual Eligible project. Both of these projects support a person's desire to live in the least restrictive environment while reducing the high cost of institutional (both hospital and nursing facility) care. The Commission's groundbreaking 2008 project demonstrates Connecticut's population shift and the projected growth in the older demographic, which has led to workforce initiatives designed to support the growing need for home care services. Most recently, a Livable Communities Conference, spearheaded by the Commission, brought together many municipal leaders to identify policies and planning techniques to help the cities/towns prepare for the shift in the aging demographic. Critical work so capably accomplished by the three dedicated staff members.

The aging network is a diverse group of advocates, consumer representatives, legislators and direct service personnel. The breadth of the issues impacting the quality of life for older adults is only rivaled by the budgetary impact of programs supporting this population. The Commission on Aging is in a unique position due to its legislative authority and the experience and commitment of its staff. The Commission expertly encourages cooperation and collaboration from all partners. The importance of this coordinating role should not be underestimated as it is the linchpin for much of the good work currently supporting the Administration's policy goals.

We fully understand the efforts necessary to control costs and bring the State's budget under control; however, we encourage careful consideration of the clearly demonstrated value the Commission on Aging affords the aging network, a value added by no other organization. We look forward to continued extraordinary contribution by the Commission and thank you for your commitment to the health and welfare of Connecticut's older population.

Penny Young, Chairman C4A

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