

**Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
3/22/2013**

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Sullivan Senior Center**

HB 6354 - OPPOSE elimination of the Commission on Aging

Q. Can the Legislature Afford Elimination of the Commission on Aging?

A. No. The Legislature cannot afford the elimination of the CoA because a check and balance system is required between the Executive and the Legislative Branch of Government. The CoA is neutral and represents all people living in CT. Aging issues are not restricted to people age 60 and over. Aging issues affect sons, daughters, grandchildren, great grandchildren, friends and neighbors.

Q. What is the Work of the CoA?

A. The work of the CoA is to support the Legislature on important issues. Examples include:

1. **to continue to staff and function as a member** of various legislative task forces, such as the *Grandparent Visitation Rights Task Force and Aging in Place Task Force*
2. **to continue to develop** strategic plans such as the *Workforce Development* which is available to the Legislature for planning and implementation
3. **to continue to co-chair** the *Money Follows the Person Steering Committee* and the *Long Term Care Advisory Council* and to take an active role to ensure tens of millions of federal funds come into the State to support community based services
4. **to partner** on projects such as the *Elder Economic Security Initiative*
5. **to continue to work on Legislature mandates** such as HB 6396, a bill that has CoA leading a livable communities initiative on behalf of the legislature and HB 5762 that requires the CoA to study funding sources for Community Based Service and Alzheimer's Services
6. **to continue innovative work** on behalf of elders in our State to improve quality of life, with choice and dignity

Q. What Does it Cost the State of CT to Fund the Commission on Aging?

A. A mere .00001% of the State budget supports the function of the CoA and 3 staff at the cost of \$253,000 this fiscal year. Looking at their impressive body of work, it is extraordinary 3 people, under the leadership of Julie Evans Starr, accomplish high quality results based work supported by such a small budget.

Please safeguard the Commission on Aging. Connecticut is the 7th oldest State in the nation, soon to be the 6th oldest State. The CoA represents this constituency, your constituency. For twenty years the CoA co-existed with the State Unit on Aging, there is no need to eliminate the CoA because of the re-establishment of the Department on Aging. Their roles are different, their work is with different branches of government and

the CoA is time proven, particularly demonstrated by their effort with rebalancing and their oversight to ensure millions of dollars flow into DSS.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Serving 35 years in the aging network