



Appropriations Public Hearing
2/19/2013

Paula Van Ness, CEO
Connecticut Community Foundation

HB 6350, Section 11 – OPPOSE

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee, Thank you for opportunity to comment on HB 6350 and the proposed elimination of the Commission on Aging. We oppose this proposal.

As a community foundation with a strong interest and commitment to older adults in our region and in Connecticut, we are deeply concerned about the proposed elimination of the Legislature's Commission on Aging.

The Connecticut Community Foundation is the only community foundation in the state with a fund dedicated specifically to older adults. Our goal is to assist seniors in aging successfully in their communities. The Connecticut Commission on Aging is a valuable resource in informing our work and helping us maximize the impact of our aging-related investments.

The Commission provides leadership on issues that are important to our region and to Connecticut as a whole. These include livable communities, strengthening of local service capacity to promote aging in place, and addressing workforce needs in home care.

Over the past several years, the state's philanthropy community has worked to develop a better understanding of aging issues in Connecticut through the EngAGEMENT project. The Commission on Aging has been essential as a source of nonpartisan research, analysis and balanced, reasoned policy recommendations. The partnership between the Connecticut Commission on Aging and the philanthropy community was highlighted by collaboration with the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy on the recent Livable Communities Forum and a publication for municipal leaders called "Creating Communities for a Lifetime."

The Commission on Aging is a small, active and highly effective organization that has a unique role in the state. Unlike the Department on Aging, the role of COA is not the administration of direct services and programs. Given the rapid aging of our population and new opportunities for improving our system of community services and supports, the role of the Commission on Aging in broad-based planning for the aging of Connecticut will be even more important in the coming years.

We urge you to allow the valuable work of the Legislature's Commission on Aging to continue.