

March 22, 2013

To Appropriations Committee

From Mary--Ann Langton

HB 6354, Section 90 - OPPOSE

Good Evening Senator Harp, Representative Flaxer and Committee members,

My name is Mary-Ann Langton, and I live in West Harford. I am here to represent myself as well as the disability community, and we urge the Governor **NOT ELIMINATE THE COMMISSION ON AGING** in his proposed state budget.

The role of the Commission of Aging (CoA) is unique because it is the only non-partisan office in state government. The CoA is charged with studying, providing research, and speaking on all matters regarding the ever-growing population of older adults in Connecticut. They can speak on issues and not be afraid on 'speaking the truth.' CoA continues to be very involved with a number of task forces and is a key player with major initiatives that would improve the quality of life for individuals in our state.

Over the last ten years, the CoA and the disability community have work together because they saw many similarities within both populations. The CoA and the disability community have been working on a federal infrastructure grant called Money Follows the Person initiative. This grant is being administered by the Department of Social Services. The Executive Director of the CoA was the elected to be one of the co-chairs to the Money Follows the Person Steering Committee.

The co-chairs are striving to rebalance the system to enable more people with disabilities and people who are aging to live in various communities rather than residing in institutions.

Another staff person from the CoA serves as the chair of the **Money Follows the Person Workforce Development Subcommittee**. This subcommittee is working to build long-term services and supports workforce that is sustainable, respected and skilled. The committee has had many focus groups to learn from personal care assistants about what attract them to this profession. From their input, we are developing publications that would attract additional workers. They assist people with disabilities with their daily living needs so they live in the community.

The CoA staff is highly thought of by willingness of pulling various people together, in order, to work on issues. The disability committee and I ask the Appropriation Committee to re-consider eliminating the Commission of Aging.

Thank you.