



*TESTIMONY OF COMMISSIONER EDITH PRAGUE
AGING COMMITTEE*

MARCH 4, 2014

Senator Ayala, Representative Serra, Senator Kelly, Representative Adinolfi and distinguished members of the Aging Committee. My name is Edith Prague. I am the Commissioner of the State Department on Aging. I am also the former Senator from the 19th district and former Senate Chair of the Aging Committee. I am pleased to offer written testimony in support of Section 5 of Raised Bill No. 5395 AN ACT CONCERNING AGING IN PLACE

Section 5 of this bill states that "The Department on Aging and the Department of Social Services shall hold quarterly meetings with nutrition service and food security stakeholders to develop recommendations to address complexities in nutrition services administrative processes, establish quality control benchmarks and help move toward greater quality, efficiency and transparency in the elderly nutrition program."

As Commissioner of the State Department on Aging, I am aware of the significant value of a strong nutrition program to serve Connecticut's older adults. One of the Department's largest programs is the Elderly Nutrition Program. The Elderly Nutrition Program is a federal and state funded nutrition program that provides meals and other nutrition services to eligible participants, most of whom are age 60 and older. The program is authorized under Title III-C of the federal Older Americans Act (OAA). The program is operated through regional and local projects throughout the state by community organizations designated as Elderly Nutrition Providers (ENPs), under contract with an Area Agency on Aging. Meals are provided at congregate meal sites and by home delivery. Each meal must meet nutritional requirements and special dietary needs must be considered. In addition to providing meals, the Program provides an opportunity for socialization, nutrition education, nutrition counseling and access to social services.

The Elderly Nutrition Program serves more than 2 million meals each year with federal, state and local funds and voluntary client contributions. The program served 1,277,677 home delivered meals to 6,317 consumers in FY 2013. The program served 775,409 congregate meals to 17,209 consumers in FY 2013. Funding is approximately \$12 million, from federal and state funds.

As a Co-Chair of the Task Force to Study Aging in Place, I am pleased to say that the Task Force final report included recommendations for enhanced nutrition programs and delivery options. More specifically, the recommendation was for executive branch departments that have administrative oversight of nutrition service and food security programs to hold quarterly meetings with nutrition service and food security stakeholders (including Area Agencies on Aging, Access Agencies, nutrition providers, food security programs' representatives and contractors, nutrition site coordinators and consumers) to address complexities in nutrition services administrative processes, establish quality control benchmarks and help move toward greater quality, efficiency, and transparency in the program. The State Department on Aging supports Section 5 of Bill 5395 which addresses this particular Task Force recommendation on enhanced nutrition programs.

I want to thank the members of the Aging Committee for raising this important bill.

AGING COMMITTEE

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Senator Ayala, Representative Serra, Senator Kelly, Representative Adinolfi and distinguished members of the Aging Committee. My name is Edith Prague. I am the Commissioner of the State Department on Aging. I am also the former Senator from the 19th district and former Senate Chair of the Aging Committee. I am pleased to offer written testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 5350 AN ACT CONCERNING AGING IN PLACE

I am writing in support of Section 5 of Bill 5395, An Act Concerning Aging in Place. Section 5 of this bill states that "The Department on Aging and the Department of Social Services shall hold quarterly meetings with nutrition service and food security stakeholders to develop recommendations to address complexities in nutrition services administrative processes, establish quality control benchmarks and help move toward greater quality, efficiency and transparency in the elderly nutrition program."

As Commissioner of the State Department on Aging, I am aware of the significant value of a strong nutrition program to serve Connecticut's older adults. One of the Department's largest programs is the Elderly Nutrition Program. The Elderly Nutrition Program is a federal and state funded nutrition program that provides meals and other nutrition services to eligible participants, most of whom are age 60 and older. The program is authorized under Title III-C of the federal Older Americans Act (OAA). The program is operated through regional and local projects throughout the state by community organizations designated as Elderly Nutrition Providers (ENPs), under contract with an Area Agency on Aging. Meals are provided at congregate meal sites and by home delivery. Each meal must meet nutritional requirements and special dietary needs must be considered. In addition to providing meals, the Program provides an opportunity for socialization, nutrition education, nutrition counseling and access to social services.

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