

TESTIMONY OF: Peaches C. Quinn, M.P.H.
President, Connecticut Coalition on Aging

Appropriations Committee
February 27, 2015

Good Evening, Committee Chairs: Toni Walker and Beth Bye, ranking committee members and other esteemed members of this committee.

My name is Peaches Quinn. I am president of the Connecticut Coalition on Aging. We are a 40 year old consumer based advocacy and education group that represents the concerns of the state's aging residents across the lifespan, especially the frail elderly. I live in District 93, New Haven, and have to mention how proud I am of Chairwoman Walker's "Two Generation" work and the tireless efforts of all delegates to represent citizen concerns. My own background includes cost containment work for the Aetna, statewide work to expand family caregiver resources and work projects to help achieve the reality of "aging in place" as a viable choice for the boomer generation and beyond.

I am here this evening to oppose the section of The Governor's Budget, Bill 6846, that would "zero out" unrestricted (operating budget) monies, totaling \$528,680, to the state's five (5) Centers for Independent Living. Please do not zero out this money for the following reasons:

- First, the Centers for Independent Living are a UNIQUE and SINGULAR resource to persons with disabilities in that ALL types of disabilities, ALL ages and ALL areas of the state are served;
- Second, the Centers for Independent Living are a critical WORKFORCE INVESTMENT for our state. Their programs result in clients going to work and earning income. I refer you to ALICE , a refreshingly, clear study of CT family hardship completed by United Way, CT . ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (or the people we call the working poor). This study quantifies Household Budget Thresholds that allow making ends meet in 5 basic areas: food, housing, health, transportation, child care. ALICE research shows that CT households with a member who is living with a disability often have increased health care expenses and reduced earning power. In fact, the national median income for households where one adult is living with a disability is generally 60 percent less than those without disabilities (American Community Survey). Those we label as persons with disabilities are in fact persons with ABILITITES. The Centers must continue to put their clients to work.
- And finally, I urge you, DO NOT zero out the budget line for the Centers for Independent Living. That would mean total loss of their Federal match, thus TOTAL OR NEAR TOTAL LOSS of unrestricted funds used for operating costs.

In closing, the ideal budget outcome would be to keep funding whole to the Centers for Independent Living. Short of that, please do not zero out their funding. I implore you to work with them on reductions that assure all is not lost.

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