



Real Possibilities

DRAFT Testimony of Brenda Lind, AARP Advocacy Volunteer
Opposing Homecare and Respite Cuts in
H.B. 6846, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS
Human Services Committee
Feb. 26, 2015

Good afternoon, Chairwomen Moore and Abercrombie, and Ranking Members Markley and Wood. My name is Brenda Lind. I am an AARP volunteer from West Hartford, CT. AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with an age 50+ membership of nearly 37 million nationwide, and approximately 600,000 here in Connecticut. AARP helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, family caregiving, and independent living.

I am here today to speak not just as an AARP advocate, but also as a daughter. My mother suffered from Alzheimer's disease and I know from first-hand experience the strain Alzheimer's disease places on families and caregivers. That's why I am asking you to please reject the 25% cut in the Alzheimer's Respite Care program and the crippling cuts proposed to the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders. Both these programs are essential to supporting vulnerable seniors and the family caregivers that keep loved ones out of nursing homes.

Ninety-one (91%) of Connecticut residents believe it is important for Connecticut to offer services to age in place, but, unfortunately, Governor Malloy's budget proposal would:

- More than double home care costs for thousands of at-risk seniors, potentially increasing the cost by more than \$230/month for those seniors with the greatest needs;
- Cut off home care services to future seniors in need; and
- Slash respite care for unpaid family caregivers supporting loved ones with Alzheimer's disease.

Not only do these cuts harm our most vulnerable residents, they are also likely to cost Connecticut more money, not less. The reason is simple: restricting and eliminating cost-effective home care services will accelerate nursing home placement and prematurely force thousands of seniors onto Medicaid.

Thanks to many of you on this Committee, similar cuts have been rejected in the past and we again hope the legislature will stand up for seniors who want to age with independence and dignity in their own home. After paying into the system for their entire life, seniors deserve better than being forced from their homes just to get the care they need.

Please safeguard the health of our seniors by fully funding the CT Home Care Program for Elders and the Alzheimer's Respite Care program. Thank you.