



**Testimony of AARP Volunteer Advocate Pat Gerckens before the  
Appropriations Committee in Support of the  
CT Home Care Program for Elders & Alzheimer's Respite Care**

February 11, 2016

Hi I'm Pat Gerckens, age 78 and have lived in Derby for ¾ of my life. Connecticut is the only place I choose to live in, but now that I am a very senior-senior, I realize that aging is changing and that Connecticut could help more seniors live a better quality of life as they continue to age. Fortunately, I am pretty healthy for an Old Geezer (I can say that about me)!!!! I have been very active as an AARP volunteer for several years and really enjoy being part of this group which I see more than my own family.

Older adults have so much to offer and most of us want to be included in our own communities. We want to give back to local charities, volunteer at soup kitchens, socialize with neighbors and offer unsolicited advice to younger generations.

Today, I am here to share my experience as an active engaged (no ring) adult to show you why home care and family respite are more than just line items in our state budget, they are the keys to our independence.

If given the choice, almost 90% of our seniors want the choice to live in their own home for as long as they are able.

Cost- effective programs, like the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, and Alzheimer's respite care provide thousands of seniors with the choice to age independently in the communities that they love and helped to build.

I feel fortunate to have my health (and some grey matter left) I share a home with my daughter who is an RN and vows that I will never go into a nursing home ( I think she has second thoughts when I occasionally get on her nerves) but, many seniors are not as fortunate when basic chores can be a major challenge. Thankfully the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders provides an array of services including, adult day care, meals on wheels, companion and homemaker supports that make those daily chores manageable. For family caregivers who care for loved ones with Dementia, the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program provides a hard earned break.

Tonight, I urge you, to support and fully-fund, those programs that allow seniors to choose how they live and age. Please give Connecticut seniors access to services at home

through the Connecticut Home Care Programs for Elders and, help family caregivers, so that they may keep their loved ones out of costly nursing homes.

Please consider that every individual,(you'll all be seniors someday) deserves the choice of where they wish to live and most of us choose home.

Thank You.