

Testimony of

Julia Evans Starr  
Executive Director

Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging

Labor and Public Employees Committee

March 8, 2016

State Capitol  
210 Capitol Ave.  
Hartford, CT 06106  
860-240-5200  
www.cga.ct.gov/coa

Julia Evans Starr  
Executive Director

Deb Migneault  
Senior Policy Analyst

Alyssa Norwood  
Project Manager

Christianne Kovel  
Special Projects  
Coordinator

*With 21 volunteer  
board members from  
across the state*

Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, Senator Hwang, Representative Rutigliano and esteemed members of the Labor Committee, my name is Julia Evans Starr and I am the Executive Director for Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging. I thank you for this opportunity to comment on SB 393: An Act Concerning Domestic Workers.

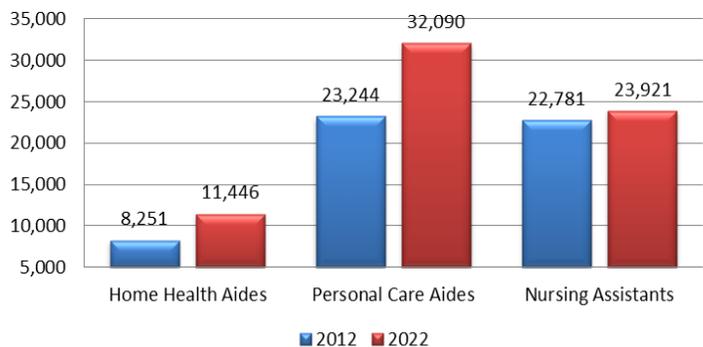
Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging is the non-partisan, public policy office of the General Assembly devoted to preparing Connecticut for a significantly changed demographic and enhancing the lives of the present and future generations of older adults. For over twenty years, the Legislative Commission on Aging has served as an effective leader in statewide efforts to promote choice, independence and dignity for Connecticut's older adults and persons with disabilities.

**SB 393: An Act Concerning Domestic Workers  
~ CT's Legislative Commission on Aging Supports**

The Legislative Commission on Aging supports this bill that will help to protect the rights of domestic workers, including those that provide care to older adults in their homes, like homemakers and companions and personal care assistants. The Commission firmly supports the rights of these workers as they are the backbone to our home and community-based system and directly impact the quality of care one receives.

Personal care aides are one of the fastest growing occupations in the state. The State Department of Labor projects that the state will need almost 9,000 more PCA's and more than 3,000 more home health aides by 2022.

**CT Direct Care Workforce Employment Projections  
2012 to 2022**



This vast growth is due to a variety of factors. As you know, the population in Connecticut, across the country and around the globe is aging dramatically. Between 2010 and 2030, Connecticut's population of adults age 65 and older will increase by 57%, while the working age population will only increase by 2%. Further, the state is in the midst of rebalancing its long-term services and supports system. Rebalancing is the state's policy movement to provide choice to individuals to receive supports in their homes as opposed to institutional settings. Yet, supporting the state's direct care workforce is one of the most significant and essential, yet often neglected, component to achieve success in long-term services and supports "rebalancing". As Connecticut aggressively pursues the Medicaid LTSS rebalancing goals set forth in the state's LTSS Plan and the Governor's Rebalancing Plan, the need for focused efforts to recruit, train, retain and support paid and unpaid direct care workers is essential.

The Domestic Workers Bill of Rights will establish labor standards that protect workers' basic standards rights, including safe working conditions, unemployment benefits, paid sick leave to care for themselves (and protect those they care for) and freedom from discrimination and harassment. Again, supporting our workforce and valuing the importance of their work will help to attract and retain workers as well as enhance quality of life for those that they are caring for.