

Connecticut Commission on  
Women, Children *and* Seniors



**CWCS**

Testimony of  
Christy Kovel, Senior Policy Analyst-Aging  
Commission on Women, Children and Seniors  
Submitted to the  
Aging Committee  
February 14, 2017

**Re: Raised Bill 770- An Act Increasing the Personal Needs Allowance for Long-Term Care Facility Residents**  
**Raised Bill 772- An Act Requiring Emergency Generators in Certain Housing for the Elderly**

Senator Flexer and Senator Kelly, Representative Serra and esteemed members of the Aging Committee, my name is Christy Kovel I am the Senior Policy Analyst for Aging for the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors. We are the non-partisan arm of the Connecticut General Assembly. As staff to the legislature, the CWCS researches best practices, coordinates stakeholders, and promotes public policies that are in the best interest of Connecticut's underserved and underrepresented women, children and older adults.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on two raised bills.

**Raised Bill 770- An Act Increasing the Personal Needs Allowance for Long-Term Care Facility Residents**

~CWCS Supports

We appreciate this committee's ongoing commitment to the personal needs allowance (PNA) for nursing home residents. As you are aware, the PNA is used for grooming, clothing, TV/phone service and other items that help improve the quality of life and preserve dignity for nursing home residents. The president of the Coalition for Presidents of Resident Councils sits on the Long-Term Care Advisory Council which CWCS Co-Chairs, and has shared the challenges that residents in facilities face with the current allowance. We support the increase the PNA from \$60 to \$72.75/month and, at the very least, support maintaining the current level. (note: The Governor's recently released proposed budget reduces the personal needs allowance to \$50 for a projected savings of \$1 million.)

**Raised Bill 772- An Act Requiring Emergency Generators in Certain Housing for the Elderly**

~CWCS Informs

During power outages, older adults may be especially vulnerable with complex medical conditions that necessitate the need for a consistent power source. Connecticut has endured significant storms over the past several years which highlighted this issue in many communities. Sustained loss of

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power put people with compromised health conditions at further risk. Shelters and hospital emergency rooms were overloaded with people that were in need of power to maintain their health. Providing for generators at housing developments for older adults and persons with disabilities has the potential to limit the use of emergency rooms and emergency shelters during periods of prolonged power outages. However the fiscal impact in communities remains a significant barrier to implementation.

A new law passed at the end of the 2016 legislative session (**PA 16-3, MSS, §176**), required the Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors to study the need for emergency power generators at Connecticut's elderly public housing sites. As a newly consolidated agency, we recognize the importance of providing more information on this issue, and have utilized our partnerships in leveraging the resources to execute this. We hope to provide a snapshot of best practices in implementation to inform future policy, and look forward to submitting our findings to this committee as well as the housing and public safety committee at the end of this month.