



Testimony to the Aging Committee

Submitted by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

February 14, 2017

Regarding

- **SB 756, AN ACT CONCERNING NURSING HOME SERVICES**
- **SB 757, AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVES**
- **SB 758, AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF MEDICAID-FUNDED PROGRAMS**
- **SB 770, AN ACT INCREASING THE PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE FOR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY RESIDENTS**
- **SB 771, AN ACT REDUCING PARTICIPANT COSTS AND EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CONNECTICUT HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY**
- **SB 772, AN ACT REQUIRING EMERGENCY GENERATORS IN CERTAIN HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY**
- **HB 6990, AN ACT CONCERNING LONG-TERM CARE NEEDS**
- **HB 7020, AN ACT REQUIRING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING LONG-TERM CARE**
- **HB 7021, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY BEST PRACTICES TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION FOR VETERANS, SENIOR CITIZENS AND DISABLED PERSONS**

LeadingAge Connecticut is a membership association of 130 not-for-profit organizations representing the entire field of aging services and including not-for-profit nursing homes. On behalf of LeadingAge Connecticut, I respectfully submit the following testimony to the Aging Committee regarding the following bills before you today.

SB 756, AN ACT CONCERNING NURSING HOME SERVICES

SB 758, AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF MEDICAID-FUNDED PROGRAMS

HB 6990, AN ACT CONCERNING LONG-TERM CARE NEEDS

LeadingAge Connecticut has no objection to these proposed bills and would be happy to assist the Committee and the state with such studies.

SB 757, AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVES

LeadingAge Connecticut is supportive of all the Committee's efforts to increase the funding for the Department of Aging's programs that provide home and community based services for older adults and their families.

SB 770, AN ACT INCREASING THE PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE FOR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY RESIDENTS

The personal needs allowance can enhance an individual's personal experience and quality of life as a resident of a skilled nursing facility and we commend the Committee for seeking an increase in the current level of \$60. LeadingAge Connecticut will also be opposing current proposals to decrease the personal needs allowance for nursing home residents.

SB 771, AN ACT REDUCING PARTICIPANT COSTS AND EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CONNECTICUT HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY

LeadingAge Connecticut believes in the principle of ensuring choice for persons seeking long term services and supports and we know that a strong and balanced continuum of care that provides the right care, in the place, at the right time will lead to a more efficient and effective care delivery system. It is for these reasons that we strongly support the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE).

The state funded portion of the CHCPE that is addressed in this proposal is invaluable to many as it helps older adults access services sooner, before they have exhausted all of their assets. We commend the Committee for seeking a reduction in the current co-pay requirements which can be seen as a barrier to receiving care. And while we would always support expansion of this program, we encourage the Committee to place a priority on ensuring adequate funding for the elderly who are currently eligible and enrolled so that they may continue to receive the services and supports they need to remain in the community.

SB 772, AN ACT REQUIRING EMERGENCY GENERATORS IN CERTAIN HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

LeadingAge Connecticut represents many not-for-profit affordable senior housing organizations. We appreciate what we believe to be the intent of this proposal which is to ensure that the elderly residents of senior housing developments are sheltered and protected during electrical power outages. We agree that emergency preparedness plans should be in place for all senior housing sites and such plans should be established in coordination with local municipalities.

We are concerned about the fiscal impact of requiring the purchase of emergency power generators for public housing projects consisting of one hundred or more units. The cost of installing and maintaining a generator that provides limited power to a housing community is very high and is dependent on the size of the facility and the anticipated electrical load. In 2013 we were told that the initial cost could run anywhere from \$50,000 to \$150,000 for a typical site of just 30 or 50 units. In fact, one of our members several years ago installed a generator in a forty unit community at a cost of approximately \$125,000 and that generator can provide power to the building systems, common areas and limited power to each unit. The cost therefore would be even higher to provide emergency power to a development of over one hundred units as is proposed in this bill.

Senior housing sites should work with municipal agencies to plan for long term power outages and it would be extremely helpful for the state to offer low cost loans or grants to housing providers who choose to install back-up generators as part of their plans. However, mandating the purchase of generators without providing the funding for such purchases would be unachievable for many elderly housing communities.

HB 7020, AN ACT REQUIRING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING LONG-TERM CARE

LeadingAge Connecticut supported the Program Review and Investigation Committee's study and we would support the enactment of these recommendations that resulted from the study. The study recognized that Connecticut is successfully transitioning the Medicaid program through several initiatives, including a rebalancing of the long term services and supports system so that more people can receive long term services and supports in community based settings. The recommendations would provide the state with more accurate data to assist in our planning and delivery of these necessary aging services.

**HB 7021, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY BEST PRACTICES TO PROVIDE
TRANSPORTATION FOR VETERANS, SENIOR CITIZENS AND DISABLED PERSONS**

Transportation is a critical factor in determining whether an older adult will be able to remain in their home and active in their community. LeadingAge Connecticut would be happy to serve such a task force through our active participation and assistance.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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