

Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-157

AN ACT REDUCING PARTICIPANT COSTS AND EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY
Title: FOR THE CONNECTICUT HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY.

Vote Date: 3/15/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/1/2018

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following Joint Favorable Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Aging Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Connecticut Home Care Program is fundamental in reducing unnecessary placement in skilled nursing facilities. This bill would enable more seniors to remain in their homes with dignity.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Social Services, State of Connecticut: DSS is unable to support this legislation as it proposes to increase the state-funded portion and increase eligibility to the Connecticut Home Care Program. DSS advises that CHCP is a completely state funded program and this proposal would result in a significant fiscal impact on the state.

Steven Hernandez, Esq., Executive Director, Connecticut Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS): Supports this bill. The eligibility portion targets a specific senior population of elders who have not spent down to Medicaid eligibility but would benefit from home care services. Nursing home care can be much more expensive and should be a last resort option for families.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Christy Kovel, Director of Public Policy, Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter: Supports this bill. Ms. Kovel testifies the Connecticut Home Care Program (CHCP) is a highly utilized program within the dementia community. It provides seniors who have not spent down to Medicaid eligibility an option to receive home care services. These individuals participate in both an applied income and cost share process. This enables them to deter the more costly nursing home care.

Deborah Chernoff, Public Policy Director, New England Healthcare Employees Union, District 1199: Strongly support this bill making services more accessible and affordable for the elderly.

Iris Rivera-Acosta, Volunteer, AARP: Supports the bill. She believes this will benefit seniors, caregivers and saves taxpayers money in nursing home care.

Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut: Supports this bill. Ms. Morelli explains the state funded portion of this bill is invaluable to many older adults access to services. They strongly support the Connecticut Home Care Program (CHCP). This bill would enable more seniors to remain in their homes avoiding costly nursing homes.

Connecticut Assisted Living Association (CALA): Supports this bill. Both adjustments of this proposal would make a significant difference in the life of some of our state's most vulnerable citizens while saving state tax dollars for more costly institutionalization of low income seniors.

Deborah R. Hoyt, President and CEO, Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home: Supports this bill. Ms. Hoyt presents a notable statistic from a recent annual report by Department of Social Services: "Home health agencies save the State General Fund on average \$103-million per year by keeping Medicaid clients out of institutionalized settings."

Edward G. Lang, Law Offices of Lang and Corona, P.C., Middlefield, CT: Supports this bill that will enable an individual to remain in their homes and not be forced into convalescent care.

Jean Horn Caron, Volunteer, AARP: Supports the bill. Ms. Caron's testimony was partially that of her own personal family experience with the Connecticut Home Care Program. Her mother passed away at the age of 97, and only spent her last 3 months in a nursing home.

Mary-Kay Harrity, Norwalk CT: Ms. Harrity testifies that her mother, 98 years old, is still home, and it is because of programs like Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly and RESPITE. The cost of home care is much less than nursing placement.

Robin Roscillo, Wilton, CT: Supports the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted.

Reported by: Diane Arroyo

Date: 3/26/2018