

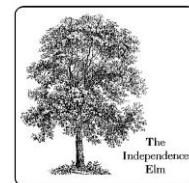


Tanya D. Lane
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

120 Cedar Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

Senior and Disabled Center



Dianne Stone
Director

Testimony of

Dianne Stone, Director, Newington Senior and Disabled Center

Human Services Public Hearing

HB 7359 - Support

3/21/19

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and esteemed members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Dianne Stone and I am the Director of the Newington Senior and Disabled Center, a position I have held for more than 20 years and I express my support for **HB7359: AN ACT CONCERNING A LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK.**

I was especially pleased to see that LGBT Aging Advocacy was included for participation in the network this bill seeks to establish. I am a founding member of that group, established as a very grassroots effort to address the needs of older adults who identify as LGBT. This is a population that is far less likely to have family support and also far less likely to access formal supports because of the fear and reality of discrimination. This is population that has a higher rate of disability, higher rates of depression and chronic disease, are more likely to live alone and less likely to access medical care.

One of the initiatives that came out of LGBT Aging Advocacy is Getting it Right: Creating an LGBT Inclusive Organization. <https://ctcommunitycare.org/getting-it-right> This is a program of Connecticut Community Care with funding from the John H. and Ethel G. Noble Charitable Trust. Getting it Right (GIR) is an integrated set of resources designed to help home care and facility-based service providers serving elders to implement LGBT inclusion practices. GIR begins with the premise that inclusivity requires proactive practices that go beyond current standards and policies of non-discrimination. Inclusivity is a collection of defined practices, not intentions. A companion project within GIR is the LGBT Moveable Senior Center. This is a collaborative program between 12 senior centers in the Greater Hartford area with one expansion site in western Connecticut. We started it in recognition of the fact that older adults who identify as LGBT are less likely to access services and senior centers are a natural gateway. A second objective is to improve the inclusivity of senior centers. We have succeeded on both counts.

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And we have seen the very real needs and concerns of this population in accessing health care. The proposed network is needed.

I do have one concern with the bill and that is the capacity of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors in providing administrative support. The Commission is currently funded for 6 staff. Two of those positions are filled. The CWCS has responsibility for several initiatives and they are not able to attend to all of them. I would urge you to ensure that the CWCS is fully staffed so that they are able to support these valuable and important initiatives.

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