

# Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-161

**Title:** AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVES.

**Vote Date:** 3/4/2020

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Appropriations

**PH Date:** 2/27/2020

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Aging Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The bill appropriates \$3 million to the Dept of Social Services for the purpose of expanding access to the Connecticut Home-Care Program for the Elderly and the Alzheimer's disease respite care program so that more seniors may age at home.

The JFS language adds the Dept. of Aging and Disability Services to the bill appropriating a total of \$3 million to expand the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly and Alzheimer's disease respite care program. The language appropriates \$2 million to DSS to expand the larger CHCPE and \$1 million to DADS for a smaller Alzheimer's program.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Dept of Social Services:** The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders is currently open to all eligible persons, without a waitlist and has adequate funding to support anticipated caseload growth. For that reason, the DSS does not see the need for additional funding and would defer to the Dept of Aging and Disability Services to comment on the Statewide respite Care Program.

**Amy Porter, Commissioner of the Dept. of Aging and Disability Services:** She offered testimony in opposition to this proposal. She points out that the second program known as the Alzheimer's Respite Care program is housed in the DADS and not DSS. She feels that this is a worthwhile program and the Governor's budget recommendation this year continues to spend \$1.8 million on these efforts. She strongly supports keeping within the carefully drawn appropriations presented by the Governor earlier this month.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Connecticut Assisted Living Association:** They spoke in support of these proposals for the important supports the funding provides to some of our state's most vulnerable citizens in subsidized assisted living settings. Resident's participation with both the state's subsidized Assisted Living Demonstration Project sites and the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders ultimately save state tax dollars as well as prevent unnecessary, costly institutionalization of low-income seniors.

**AARP Connecticut:** They strongly support additional appropriations for these programs which help older residents age safely in their homes and provide valuable support to family caregivers.

**Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut:** They are supportive of all the Committee's efforts to increase funding for the state funded and administered programs that provide home and community-based services for the elderly.

**Tracy Wodatch, President and CEO, Connecticut Association for healthcare at Home:** They are in support of this bill pointing out that they are a cost saving vehicle for the state. They say that in 2018, home-based providers saved the state almost \$399 million under the CT Home Care Program for Elders. Home Health Agencies have not had a rate increase (beyond 1%) in 13 years. At the same time, they have had Medicaid rate cuts amounting to 22% along with significant mandated and unfunded burdens. Additionally, the COLA has risen over the last 13 years by 23.94%.

This financial formula has caused skilled home health agencies to close their doors, consolidate with other agencies and make very difficult decisions to reduce or stop taking Medicaid clients already making access to home Health Agency Medicaid Services an issue.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

No testimony submitted

Reported by: Richard Ferrari, Assistant Clerk  
Gaia McDermott, Clerk

**Date:** 3/11/2020