



*Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging:  
Agency on Aging of South Central CT  
North Central Area Agency on Aging  
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[www.ctagenciesonaging.org](http://www.ctagenciesonaging.org)*

This written testimony is submitted on behalf of the five regional Connecticut Area Agencies on Aging (C4A), a membership organization dedicated to improving the quality of life and independence for older persons and persons with disabilities. The Agencies on Aging represent individuals in every Connecticut city and town and are the “point of entry” for older adults and caregivers in need of assistance to navigate and enroll in local, State and Federal support services.

**S.B. No. 56 AN ACT DETERRING AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS**

Since our inception in the 1970s as a product of the Older Americans Act of 1965, Area Agencies on Aging have advocated for elder justice as part of our collective mission. From raising awareness about elder abuse and exploitation to fighting ageism in all its forms and seeking cultural change. With the aging of the population nationally and more rapidly here in CT, the issue of age discrimination in the hiring process and during employment is becoming a significant threat to the financial health and well-being of a substantial sector of the labor market. One cost-neutral and non-intrusive way to address front-facing issues and to eliminate potential barriers is to remove any reference to age or timelines on job applications. For this reason, C4A wholly supports S.B. 56.

**S.B. No. 812 (RAISED) AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM.**

C4A appreciates the concept of relaxing eligibility guidelines for the CT Alzheimer's Respite Program and the implicit support of the program illustrated by the intent of this bill. However, increased eligibility without an increase in funds available to the Program may result in reduced care plans and potential safety issues for vulnerable elders.

**S.B. No. 813 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING RETROACTIVE MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY FOR HOME CARE SERVICES.**

C4A recognizes the concerns related to retroactive funding of Medicaid home care services including compliance with person-centered care planning and mandatory Medicaid reimbursement rates. C4A is represented on a task force with the CT Association for Healthcare at Home and the Department of Social Services. We are hopeful that continued solution-based discussion will decrease the period between application and enrollment for home care services. Another potential solution would be

a thoughtful process of Presumptive Eligibility as it would serve the purpose of expedited access to home care services while maintaining compliance and maximizing cost sharing with Medicaid.

**S.B. No. 818 (RAISED) AN ACT PERMITTING THE COMMUNITY SPOUSE OF AN INSTITUTIONALIZED MEDICAID RECIPIENT TO RETAIN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF ALLOWABLE ASSETS.**

C4A members respectfully request the Committee's consideration for this important bill that would decrease the economic anxiety and reduce the likelihood of a community spouse's trajectory towards needing State assistance for their own care. Maintenance of older adults and individuals with disabilities in the least restrictive setting and in the setting of their choice is a key pillar toward rebalancing CT's Medicaid system. Therefore, increasing to the maximum allowable spousal assessment makes good sense for Connecticut's residents and long-term care fiscal strategies.

**H.B. No. 6354 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RENTERS' REBATE PROGRAM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**

Accessible and affordable housing remains one of CT's most pressing issues facing older adults and individuals with disabilities. Unfortunately, housing-related issues were greatly exacerbated as a result of COVID-19 which created additional barriers to application completion and program administration. Providing municipalities permission to exempt renters from securing a notary for their submission under specific circumstances and preventing delays resulting from the lack of a notarized copy sends a strong signal of support for the dignity of community-living and correctly puts people before of process.

**H.B. No. 6353 (RAISED) AN ACT INCREASING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER NONPARENT RELATIVES RAISING CERTAIN CHILDREN.**

There is a wealth of research demonstrating the benefits of maintaining the family structure whenever possible. Grandparents and other relatives should be encouraged to support needy, familial children despite their economic state. The Agencies on Aging host support groups for grandparents raising grandchildren through Older Americans Act funds. We routinely hear from grandparents that they will forego their basic needs in order to provide the bare necessities for their grandchildren. Economic security is the number one concern discussed by grandparents taking on the challenge of raising their grandchildren at advanced stage in their own lives. The COVID-19 pandemic, again, has disproportionately affected these families as income remains fixed but food costs, technology costs, electricity, and heat have all increased due to lack of access of social supports such school systems and summer camps.

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