



# NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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Testimony on H.B. 6446: An Act Concerning The Governor's Budget Recommendations  
For Human Services

Human Services Committee

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Submitted By: Stephen Wanczyk-Karp

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter we offer the following brief comments on H.B. 6446.

Section 1-2 eliminate the Cost-of-Living Adjustments under Public Assistance Programs. Current statute provides recipients of Temporary Family Assistance, State Administered General Assistance and State Supplement for the Aged and Disabled and annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA). We whole-heartedly oppose this recommendation.

CT is one of the few states that allows TFA recipients to retain their full cash assistance benefit if their employment earnings are equal or less than the federal poverty level. The Governor finds this not-acceptable, we find it absolutely appropriate. To do otherwise is to create a disincentive for working toward increasing of wages.

The cost-of-living increase was a long, hard fight to assure that recipients of public monetary assistance programs did not fall further and further into poverty as the cost of living rose each year. Prior to the COLA the Legislature debated every year whether to offer increases in benefits and many years none were forthcoming. For a state with the wealth of Connecticut and the costs of living in Connecticut it would be a public disgrace to eliminate the COLA.

Governor Lamont opposes increasing taxes on the wealthiest households in Connecticut who can afford to open their wallets a little wider to fund the state services we all use. Yet it is ok to remove the meager support given to public assistance recipients through an annual COLA? Accepting this recommendation will be shameful. Driving our state's poorest members deeper and deeper into poverty is shameful. This recommendation must be defeated.

H.B. 6446 recommends in sections 7-9 implementation of an Acuity-Based Reimbursement System for nursing homes. We support this recommendation as the nature of nursing home resident's needs have drastically changed over the years. Reimbursement based on acuity that recognizes rates should be tied in to actual levels of required care makes complete sense.