

# Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-900

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

**Vote Date:** 3/2/2021

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

**PH Date:** 2/23/2021

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Aging Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Currently many family caregivers provide services for seniors who remain in their homes. These caregivers can become overworked and stressed assuming so many additional responsibilities. More support would be a benefit to the caregivers who assist the seniors in remaining in their homes. This ultimately will allow the seniors to maintain their independence, dignity and mobility. The bill is designed to increase state support for initiatives allowing senior citizens to age in place in their homes by increasing funding to the Dept. of Social Services and the Dept of Aging and Disability Services. This may ease some of the financial burden to the state.

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

**Senator Paul Formica, Connecticut General Assembly:** He is in support of this bill because our state's population is rapidly aging. The bill will increase state resources for initiatives that would allow senior citizens to age in place at home. This increased support for the Dept. of Social Services and the Dept. of Aging and disability services would allow them to expand services to state programs to seniors.

**David Seifel, The Dept. of Social Services:** They are not in support of this legislation. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders which includes both a Medicaid waiver and a state-funded portion is currently open to all eligible persons, without a waitlist, and has adequate funding to support anticipated caseload growth. For that reason, the Dept. does not see the need for additional funding for the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders.

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

**Mark McGoldrick, Chairman, Home Health Care Assoc. of America:** They are in support of this bill especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional funds to the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders would help persons maintain their independence, dignity and mobility. The Connecticut Statewide Respite Care Program offers relief to stressed caregivers. The program may subsidize the cost of services. The funding for the two programs would help improve the well-being of seniors so they can remain at home longer in a safe and familiar environment.

**Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut:** They are supportive of this proposal. This bill would increase the funding for these initiatives which is needed to expand access to more individuals and their families.

**Kathleen Flaherty, Executive Director, Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc.:** They offered testimony in support of this bill. The Connecticut Legal Rights Project was established in 1990 due to a Consent Order that mandated the state provide funding for CLRP to protect the civil rights of DMHAS clients who are hospitalized, as well as those clients who are living in the community.

**Christy Kovel, Director, Alzheimer's Assoc., Connecticut Chapter:** The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders and the Alzheimer's Disease Respite Care Program provide resources needed to support older adults with the challenges they may face as they age. Increasing funding for both these programs is more cost efficient and honors consumer choice and will help meet the growing needs of the states changing demographics.

**Anna Doroghazi, AARP Connecticut:** They are in support of this of this proposal. The AARP strongly supports additional appropriation for these programs. They point out that a large majority of Americans want to remain in their current home if possible. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders and the Alzheimer's Respite Program also provide help to individuals who are family care givers, who juggle full time work, taking care of children, and providing help for their aging loved ones.

**Christine DiLeone, Volunteer, Community Educator and Advocate for the Alzheimer's Assoc., Connecticut Chapter:** She offered her support for this bill and cited her own personal experiences with family members. She points out that one of the main reasons' caregivers provide care and assistance to a person with Alzheimer's or another type of dementia are the desire to keep a family member at home. The stress and difficulties that care givers face is very great because of the multiple responsibilities that they have in caring for their loved ones as well as other family needs.

**Erin Mahoney, Volunteer Advocate, Alzheimer's Assoc., Connecticut Chapter:** She offered testimony in support of this proposal and cited her own experience with a family situation. The Alzheimer's Disease Respite Care Program provides those with Alzheimer's the opportunity to stay in the community as well a providing the care giver a much-needed break. Being a care giver to someone with Alzheimer's is physically, mentally and emotionally taxing. She believes that additional funding will give more family caregivers much needed help while caring for a loved one at home.

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

No opposition testimony was submitted.

**Reported by: Richard Ferrari, Assistant Clerk  
Richard O'Neil, Assistant Clerk  
Joe Perkus, Clerk**

**Date: 3/8/21**