



**Testimony to the Aging Committee
Submitted by LeadingAge Connecticut**

February 9, 2021

Regarding

- **SB 56, AN ACT DETERRING AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS**
- **SB 812, AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM**
- **SB 815, AN ACT CONCERNING SMOKING IN NURSING HOMES, ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES AND OTHER HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY**

On behalf of [LeadingAge Connecticut](#), a membership association representing over 130 not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults across the entire field of aging services and senior housing, I am pleased to submit the following testimony on several of the bills that are before the Aging Committee.

SB 56, AN ACT DETERRING AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

LeadingAge Connecticut's national partner is LeadingAge and the vision of LeadingAge is *An America Freed from Ageism*. With that vision, we believe in promoting the individuality and worth of older people through our language and actions and that there is a need to shift the way we talk and write about older adults and the aging experience by placing a focus on person-centered values.

Ageism is the stereotyping of and discrimination against, individuals, or groups, on the basis of their age; including a tendency to view older persons as unsuitable for employment. We welcome this proposal to deter age discrimination in employment applications. We also appreciate the effort to recognize and accommodate the qualifying necessities of certain employment positions, as well as any legal age-related job requirements.

SB 812, AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM

LeadingAge Connecticut strongly supports our state's respite care program and would support any effort to increase funding so as to ensure that those currently enrolled in the program can continue to receive an adequate level of respite care as well as to expand enrollment to increase the number of individuals and their deserving caregivers who would be able to receive respite services.

Many elders with dementia live within their own homes for many years with the majority of the caregiving being provided by a spouse, relative, or close friend. These unpaid caregivers provide countless hours of unpaid long-term care, services and supports. They are the true heroes of our long-term services and supports system and providing them with needed respite is not only the right thing to do, but it is the prudent thing to do as they save our Medicaid program millions of dollars every year.

We do caution that funding for the respite program is capped and if the eligibility is expanded without a corresponding increase in funding, then the limited funding will be spread thinner and current recipients will receive less funding and therefore fewer services. *Therefore, we request that any expansion of eligibility include an increase in the funding for the program.*

SB 815, AN ACT CONCERNING SMOKING IN NURSING HOMES, ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES AND OTHER HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

We do not have any objections to this bill as proposed. In fact, regarding Section 1 (b), we have assumed that nursing homes are currently included in Section 19a-342 of the statutes as a “health care institution” and therefore while we do not think that the proposed amendment to this section of the statute is necessary, we do not oppose it.

Thank you again for continued efforts to raise the importance of aging services and to focus on the needs of older adults and the families who support them. Please consider LeadingAge Connecticut and our members as a resource to you throughout the session.

Respectfully submitted,

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