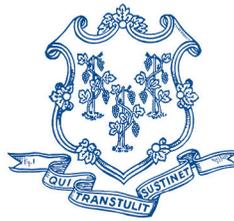


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State of Connecticut
SENATE

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER PRO TEMPORE

RANKING MEMBER
ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
EXEC. & LEGIS. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE

Testimony

Aging Committee Public Hearing

February 23, 2021

In Support of Senate Bills 274, 900, and 418

Chairs Slap, and Phipps, Ranking Members Kelly and Wilson, and the distinguished members of the Aging Committee:

I thank the members of this panel for their advocacy on behalf of Connecticut's seniors. You value and cherish our senior population and you understand the challenges they face.

Our state has a high cost of living, and as we seek to make Connecticut more affordable for middle class families, a key part of that effort must focus on our senior citizens.

Part of that positive message to our seniors involves increasing their access to affordable and vital health care. Passing policies which provide seniors with fiscal relief and improve their quality of life while allowing them to age in place will help Connecticut to become a role model for the nation.

Connecticut Senate Republicans, led by this committee's Ranking Senator Kevin Kelly, are again advocating solutions which make our state more hospitable for our elderly residents and their families. We call our approach "A Better Way", and we are pleased to note that some of our ideas already have bipartisan support.

We urge your support of:

S.B. 274: AN ACT CONCERNING AN INCOME TAX DEDUCTION FOR THE COST OF HOME HEALTH CARE.

Cost-effective home and community-based services can keep seniors at home, where they prefer to live, and stretch limited state resources. This proposal addresses that common sense goal by allowing for a state income tax deduction of up to \$60,000 for the cost of full-time home health care. This policy choice will allow for more seniors to stay in their homes and stay out of nursing homes. This policy choice could generate significant long-term savings for the State of Connecticut.

S.B. 900: AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVES.

Our state's population is rapidly aging. Given the choice, nearly 90 percent of seniors prefer to live in their own home for as long as they can. Helping seniors and their caregiving families to achieve this goal will save taxpayers money in the long-run. This bill would increase state resources for initiatives allowing senior citizens to age in place at home. This increased support would enable the Department of Social Services to expand access to the Connecticut home-care program for the elderly and the Department of Aging and Disability Services to expand access to the Alzheimer's disease respite care program.

BOZRAH, EAST LYME, MONTVILLE, NEW LONDON, OLD LYME, OLD SAYBROOK, SALEM, WATERFORD

S.B. 418: AN ACT INCREASING THE PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE FOR CERTAIN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY RESIDENTS AND AUTHORIZING A DEDUCTION FOR CONSERVATOR EXPENSES FROM THE AMOUNT OF INCOME A MEDICAID RECIPIENT APPLIES TO THE COST OF CARE.

The personal needs allowance is the monthly personal care allowance given to elderly nursing home residents who have exhausted their financial resources. This is the money that these seniors depend on for personal items like soap, haircuts, toothpaste, and other small purchases a resident may need to make such as birthday cards. In 2011, the personal needs allowance was cut from \$69 to \$60 and its cost of living adjustment indexing was eliminated. The personal needs allowance has not changed since 2011. The Senate Republican Caucus has long advocated for increasing the personal needs allowance. This proposal would increase the personal needs allowance to about \$72 per month, up from the \$60. When a monthly haircut can be \$20, body wash, shampoo, toothpaste can be between \$3 and \$7; an occasional pizza order \$15, a birthday card for a grandchild at \$5, these bills add up fast. This is about quality of life for someone at their most vulnerable time. Let's provide relief this much needed relief to our long-term care facility residents.

Budgeting is about setting priorities, and we know that members of this panel would agree that our seniors and their health care should be among our top priorities as public policy makers.

We urge you to help us create a better way for policies affecting our seniors. We urge your support for SB 274, SB 900, and SB 418.

Thank you for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul M. Formica', written in a cursive style.

Paul M. Formica
State Senator, 20th District