



Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

**Submitted by Mag Morelli, President
of LeadingAge Connecticut**

March 26, 2021

In Support of

Senate Bill 705, An Act Establishing an Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the President of LeadingAge Connecticut, a statewide membership association representing 130 not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults across the continuum of aging services. Our members are all governed by community boards and they provide care, services and housing for approximately 12,000 older adults each day.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 705, An Act Establishing an Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness. This bill proposes to establish an Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness within the Department of Public Health. We support the concept of pandemic planning and as an association, we participated in previous statewide pandemic planning exercises with the Department of Public Health. Our members also engage in emergency preparedness planning and were instrumental in the development of our state's strong Long-Term Care Mutual Aid Plan that has so effectively assisted us in our current pandemic operations.

We see value in this bill proposal because it looks beyond the Covid-19 pandemic and addresses pandemic planning in general. As you know, over the past year, the aging services field has been at the center of the global Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 is a virus that has targeted the very people we serve. But not every virus, not every pandemic is the same. We must learn from this experience, but also look beyond the specific characteristics of the Covid-19 virus and plan for other pandemic and public health emergency scenarios. This proposal recognizes that and we support its goals. We would also strongly support the allocation of additional resources to the Department of Public Health to assist them in this important function.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 705, An Act Establishing an Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness.

Respectfully submitted,

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