Testimony of Anna Doroghazi, AARP Connecticut, in Support of: S.B. 763
An Act Requiring Drivers of Paratransit Vehicles to Report Suspected Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation or Abandonment of Elderly Persons
Human Services Committee, February 16, 2021

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Ranking Members, and Members of the Human Services Committee:

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of 38 million nationwide and nearly 600,000 in Connecticut. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families. We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments in support of S.B. 763, An Act Requiring Drivers of Paratransit Vehicles to Report Suspected Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation of Elderly Persons.

According to the National Council on Aging, one in ten Americans age 60 or older have experienced some form of elder abuse, and only an estimated one in fourteen cases of abuse are reported to authorities.1 Existing Connecticut law related to mandatory reporters includes many professions, such as nurses, senior center employees, and homecare workers, who come into regular contact with elderly residents. S.B. 763 simply adds drivers of paratransit vehicles – another group of workers who come into regular contact with older residents – to the existing list of professionals who must report suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment.

I would like to direct your attention to the testimony of Alma Hernandez, who has also submitted written testimony in support of S.B. 763. Her father’s experience illustrates how paratransit workers can be one of the first points of contact when an older individual is experiencing a dangerous situation. While S.B. 763 does not fully address all of the issues raised in Ms. Hernandez’s testimony, it does acknowledge the important role that paratransit workers can play in keeping older adults safe and responding appropriately in cases of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

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