



Human Services Committee Public Hearing March 1, 2022

Testimony of Fairfield Senior Advocates– in SUPPORT of:

HB 5227

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM FOR HOME CARE.

SB 195 AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF ASSETS THAT MAY BE RETAINED BY THE SPOUSE OF AN INSTITUTIONALIZED MEDICAID RECIPIENT.

Dear Human Services Committee Members

I submit this testimony on behalf of the Fairfield Senior Advocates (FSA), an all volunteer, non-partisan organization based in Fairfield, CT that is dedicated to support the quality of life and retention of our seniors in Fairfield and elsewhere within our State.

HB 5227 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM FOR HOME CARE.

As per one of the final recommendations from the State Task Force to Study Ways to Protect Senior Citizens from Fraud and other CT organizations promoting senior issues recommended initiatives;
we support HB 5227.

It is critically important to extend the current Ombudsman Program to include Home and Community based services to assist seniors to age in place. Aging in place helps alleviate possible resource strains that our nursing homes and assisted living care communities could be experiencing, especially but not limited to staffing. With a rapidly aging CT population, more seniors are seeking home or community care, and this trend in all probability has been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. Additionally, with accelerating Nursing Home and Assisted Care Costs, economics are increasingly dictating for in-need seniors and disabled citizens that their initial option target Home Health Care and/or Community based services; hence, a Community Ombudsman program is a requisite to assist these citizens.

Seniors and disabled should ideally have a state program which will:

1. Identify, investigate, refer and resolve complaints about home care services.
2. Promote access to home care services
3. Advocate for long-term care options
4. Coach seniors and others in self advocacy
5. Provide referrals to home care clients for legal, housing and social services

The program should also raise public awareness about home care and this Community Ombudsman program and insure CT seniors are fully aware of the program and how to access it.

It would also be ideal if the program could collect data pertaining to long-term services and supports provided by a home care provider to a client albeit with appropriate written consents.

We ask the Committee to act favorably on this important bill, HB 5227.

SB 195 AN ACT INCREASING THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF ASSETS THAT MAY BE RETAINED BY THE SPOUSE OF AN INSTITUTIONALIZED MEDICAID RECIPIENT.

Our CT senior citizens require economic viability to age in place and this is a more critical requisite when a spouse is institutionalized. **We support SB 195** to set the minimum community spouse resource allowance at fifty thousand dollars.

We would also recommend that the committee consider adding an automatic annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) to this minimum.

We ask the Committee to act favorably on this important bill, SB 195

Thank you for your service and the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely;

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