

## House Republican Press Release

June 25, 2008  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Legislature Approves Home Care, Other Benefits for Seniors



By State Rep. Marilyn Giuliano

This year, the state legislature took action to improve the lives of senior citizens in several ways, and one of those measures has even been called historic.

For the first time, up to 5,000 Connecticut elderly and disabled people who have exhausted their own financial assets will become eligible for long-term care at home, rather than having to go into a nursing home.

This humanitarian step helps people to stay in the comfort of their own homes as long as possible. At the same time, it is cost-effective step for taxpayers, because home care is generally less expensive than nursing home care. Currently, providing nursing home care is one of the single largest items in the state budget.

As a co-sponsor of this new legislation, I was happy to see this measure approved, and signed into law by Gov. M. Jodi Rell.

This new law which takes effect immediately, expands the so-called Money Follows the Person Demonstration program begun last year, from 700 people to 5,000. It is a major step forward in Connecticut state law affecting senior citizens and the disabled.

Another innovation in elder care is a pilot program to help develop small-house nursing homes in Connecticut that would provide care in home-like rather than institutional settings. The goal of this legislation is to improve the quality of life for nursing home residents. The state Department of Social Services must establish guidelines for the program by October 1, 2008.

For active adults over 60, a new law mandates at least a five percent discount on automobile insurance for drivers who successfully complete an approved accident-prevention course. This law takes effect October 1, to allow time for the state Department of Motor Vehicles to adopt regulations on the approved courses, including those that may be available on the Internet.

Another new law prohibits telephone and cable television companies from charging an installation fee when a resident in a nursing home or residential care facility simply changes rooms within the facility.

A new law also was adopted to protect older people who may be thinking of selling their life insurance policies to a company in exchange for immediate cash payment while they are alive. This measure applies to whole life policies, and it specifies terms for such sales.

For people who want to start an individual savings account to save up for future home care expenses, they now have the option of contributing to a state-administered trust fund. The state comptroller will administer the Homecare Option Program for the Elderly.

A new law requires homemaker-companion agencies to have a certificate of registration from the state Department of Consumer Affairs before they can offer or provide services.

For a summary of new laws affecting seniors or questions on other state issues, please contact Marilyn Giuliano's Capitol office at 1-800-842-1423.

*Rep. Marilyn Giuliano serves the 23<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District of Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook and Westbrook in the state House of Representatives.*