

Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6775

AN ACT CONCERNING COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS TO LONG-TERM

Title: CARE FACILITY RESIDENTS' PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE.

Vote Date: 2/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/6/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Aging Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would provide cost of living adjustments annually to long-term care facility residents' personal needs allowance. This would begin on July 1, 2025, in the amount equal to 25% of the annual cost of living adjustment in the federal Supplemental Security Income Program. This is meant to account for and grow with the rising costs of the incidental items that the personal needs allowance is intended to be used for.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dept. of Social Services, Commissioner Andrea Barton Reeves: Their testimony is in **opposition** to this legislation. They point out that at \$75 the states personal need allowance is as high or higher than most of the states in the Northeast and is significantly above the federal minimum of \$30. They also indicated that the expected costs for this is not included in the Governor's budget.

Dept. of Aging and Disability Services, Ms. Mairead Painter, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman: They are in **support** of this bill. Currently the states personal need allowance is \$75 which does not reflect current economic realities. They urge the committee to consider increasing the personal needs allowance. This adjustment will ensure that our most vulnerable citizens can maintain their dignity and well-being in the long-term care setting.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

AARP Connecticut, Ms Natalie Shurtleff, Associate State Director, Advocacy and Community Outreach:

They offered comments in **support** of this proposal. The personal needs allowance enables residents to purchase everyday personal item such a clothing, toiletries, haircuts, and other personal items. At \$75 the personal needs allowance is insufficient to keep up with increased expenses in our high cost of living state.

Connecticut Legal Services, Ms. Jean Mills Aranha, Elder Law Attorney: They are in **support** of this bill. The personal needs allowance is the only money nursing home residents on Medicaid have when purchasing personal items and services. The bill does not increase the personal needs allowance, but it does reestablish a cost-of-living adjustment that will allow it to increase based on a percentage of the annual cost-of-living adjustment in the federal SSI program each year.

Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils, Mr. John Balisciano, President of the Resident Council at Apple Hewett Rehab: His testimony is in **support** of this proposal. The personal needs allowance is all they have for personal expenses and while the cost of living has steadily increased their personal needs allowance has remained the same. It does not keep up with inflation or the rising cost of goods and activities that enhance their quality of life. This bill would help alleviate this situation.

Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils, Ms. Susan Bilansky, Emeritus President of the Resident Council at the Hebrew Center: Her comments are in **support** of this bill and its passage would give her and many others some financial independence to live in a dignified way. It is about having enough to afford the simple things that allow them to take care of themselves and to participate in everyday life without the constant worry of whether they can afford basic necessities.

Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils, Ms. Jeanette Sullivan-Martinez, President of the Statewide Coalition: Her testimony was in **support** of this legislation, and she thanked the committee for its efforts in the past to increase the personal needs allowance but observed that the increase should have been in conjunction with a cost-of-living adjustment as well. This bill would help correct this oversight.

Home Matters Caregiving, Mr. Matthew Scher and Ms. Asha Scher, Owners: Their comments were in **favor** of this proposal and any efforts to improve senior care.

LTCOP Ombudsman Program, Ms. Tasha Erskine-Jackson, Regional Ombudsman: She submitted testimony in **support** of this proposal. She represents residents who struggle daily with the inability to afford basic items that most people take for granted. She believes it vital that a cost-of-living increase to the personal needs allowance to help residents cope with inflation and rising prices for basic necessities.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Ms. Ellen Lovell, American for Freedom: She is **opposed** to this bill.

Mr. Bob Crockett: He is **opposed** to this bill.

Reported by: Richard Ferrari, Assistant Clerk

Date: 2/21/25