

February 15, 2018

Dear Commission Members:

Fairfield Senior Advocates is a nonpartisan citizen action group dedicated to improving life for seniors, whose retention we believe to be critical to the finances of all State residents.

Last year's wins for seniors included: (1) a higher income threshold for exemption from the State income tax on Social Security benefits (that starts 1-1- 19); (2) a phased in exemption from State income taxes on pension and annuity income (for taxpayers with Individual/joint Incomes less than \$75K/\$100K (again starting 1-1- 19); and (3) a phased in increase in the exemption from the estate tax. Degradation of any of these actions would be discouraging to seniors.

In truth, more could have been done - and needs to be done - to retain our seniors. For example, as State finances become more stable, the Social Security tax on income for all seniors should be eliminated. Attached is a paper that our group presented to leaders of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee last year demonstrating that total elimination of this tax could promote an increase in net income for the State.

In the Legislature's current session we know there will be pressures to increase State revenues and to undo last year's gains that favored senior taxpayers. Continued attempts by the State to reduce funding to towns and to transfer State costs onto the backs of town property taxpayers can also be expected. No state more needs to retain its senior residents than Connecticut. Our seniors have been driven out through a series of State actions amounting to "death by 1,000 cuts". We desperately need a continuing series of small wins for seniors at all income/asset levels that send the message "You matter to us".

We would be happy to meet with the Commission to discuss our organization's work.

Sincerely,

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