

Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5300 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS TO LONG-TERM
Title: CARE FACILITY RESIDENTS' PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE.

Vote Date: 3/5/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/24/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Aging Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would increase the personal needs allowance by an amount of 25% of the annual cost of living adjustment in the federal Supplemental Security Income Program on July 1, 2026 and it would be adjusted annually after that date.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

None applicable

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Ms. Shantelle Varrs, Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Social Services: This bill would increase annually the personal needs allowance for residents of long term-term care facilities, but they point out that these costs are not contemplated in the Governor's budget. They also indicate that Connecticut's allowance is higher than most states that surround us and is significantly higher than the federal minimum of \$30. They cannot support this legislation at this time.

Ms. Mairead Painter, Long-Term Care Ombudsman: She is in **support** of this bill. For most resident living in long term care facilities the personal needs allowance is the only money that is their own. Since the allowance does not keep pace with inflation its value erodes over time reducing the resident's autonomy and choice.

Mr. Michael Werner, Lead Policy Analyst, Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Inclusion: They are in **support** of this legislation. This allowance is used to pay for incidental items like haircuts, phone expenses, reading materials and hobbies and when adjusted for inflation the \$30 federal minimum would equal \$82.37 in 2025 dollars. They believe that inadequate personal needs allowances compromise human rights and basic needs of older adults.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Ms. Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut & Rhode Island: They **support** the concept of providing cost of living adjustment to long-term care residents personal needs allowance.

Ms. Jean Mills Aranha, Elder Law Attorney, Connecticut Legal Services: The personal needs allowance is the only money nursing home residents on Medicaid have to purchase personal items and services. In 2021 it was raised to \$75 but its cost-of-living adjustments was not restored after its elimination in 2011. While the bill does not increase the base amount, it does reestablish a cost-of-living adjustment that will help residents live with dignity and pay for some basic needs. They are in support of this proposal.

Ms. Jeanette Martinez, Resident Council President, Pendleton: They submitted a petition from residents and family members in **support** of this bill.

Ms. Lucille Sarno, Resident Council Vice President, Mary Wade: They submitted a petition from residents and family members in **support** of this bill.

Ms. Natalie Shurtleff, Associate State Director, Advocacy and Community Outreach, AARP Connecticut: They **support** this proposal and point out that the personal needs allowance had remained stagnant for a number of years and without an increase residents are unable to afford basic everyday expenses.

Ms. Jeanette Martinez, President, Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Residential Councils of Residents Councils:

Mr. Robert Willis, Nursing Home Resident Council President, Westside Senior Care, Manchester:

Mr. John Balisciano Jr., Nursing Home Resident Council President, Apple Hewett Rehab.: They urge the Committee to **support** this legislation. This addresses a reality that residents of nursing homes must face each month, and it helps to protect their basic dignity and everyday stability.

Mr. John Stavola, Resident, Whitney Manor: He offered his testimony in **support** of this bill. He explains some of the challenges he has with insufficient funding for his personal needs allowance.

Ms. Jahaira Garcia, Resident President, Southport Rehab and Care Center: She asks the Committee to **support** this effort and provides details of her own personal experiences. She believes the bill would help residents keep with everyday costs so they don't have to give up more of the small things.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Richard Ferrari, Assist. Clerk

Date: 3/6/26