

Rep. Beiser Opposes Cuts to Elder-Care Program That Will Hurt Seniors, End Care for 40,000

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ALTON, Ill. – State Rep. Dan Beiser, D-Alton, is standing with senior advocates to speak out against the Rauner Administration’s new rules that will strip care from 40,000 elderly residents, remove criminal background check requirements for caregivers and create new costly bureaucracy, all while reducing the overall quality of care for seniors.

“Programs like Community Care are proven to be effective and helps allow seniors to remain in their homes, so they can continue to be part of our communities,” Beiser said. “To try and force seniors out of care and place them in a brand new and untested program, without allowing input from legislators or those that specialize in senior care, is completely wrong and I will continue to stand up against this new plan.”

Beiser is opposing a plan announced by Rauner's Department on Aging to unilaterally cut 40,000 seniors currently receiving homecare through the Community Care Program, and place them in a new and untested program called the Community Reinvestment Program (CRP). Senior advocates including AARP and the Illinois Association of Community Care Program Homecare Providers have expressed concern that CRP lacks the standards and requirements that are critical to seniors' health and security, while creating new layers of government bureaucracy.

The administration's draft rules for CRP also remove regulations that currently require caregivers to undergo criminal background checks. Under the Community Care Program, companies are carefully screened to confirm they do not have a history of scams or fraud, and that all employees in contact with seniors do not have criminal or sexual convictions. This critical safeguard is removed under CRP.

Rauner's Department on Aging is using an administrative rulemaking process to advance their plan without getting approval or input from the Legislature. Beiser is urging residents to call the Department on Aging at 800-252-8966 and speak out against the proposed cuts.

"The Department on Aging's proposed Community Reinvestment Program is a cost cutting, political tactic at the expense of over 40,000 of Illinois most vulnerable senior citizens, and their loved ones," said Ryan Gruenenfelder, AARP Illinois Director of Advocacy. "The proposed program hinges on service availability by geographic regions, on the continuation of budget appropriations, and the sole authority of the Department to amend eligibility standards with zero legislative oversight. The proposed program is a catalyst for seniors to face premature nursing home placement. Our state can implement common sense, compassionate and cost-effective reforms to maintain our state's current Community Care Program without jeopardizing the lives and well-being of thousands of Illinois' greatest generation."