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The budget passed by the House of Representatives this spring includes a significant increase in funding to the Social Security Administration. The pending budget request in the Senate contains an even larger increase. These funds are critical to ensure that vital services such as those provided by the Bristol field office remain available. Seniors are the fastest growing population in Bristol and the surrounding towns where 14.9 percent of the population are 65 years of age or older.

The Connecticut delegation has taken a lead in this fight and feels strongly that the undue burden closing the office will place on area seniors is not worth the relatively small amount of money it will save the Social Security Administration. For Bristol's fast growing elderly population, traveling to New Britain via public transportation is difficult.

Larson said, "We must remind the Social Security Administration and the President that they owe our seniors the respect of an accessible Social Security office. We are working to lower costs for the office. I, as well as Senators Dodd and Lieberman, feel strongly about keeping the office in Bristol open."

"It is critical that seniors have easy access to Social Security offices," said Dodd. "I will continue to work closely with Senator Lieberman and Representative Larson to urge Commissioner Astrue to reconsider his decision to close the Bristol office. Thousands of Connecticut seniors rely on Social Security and they should not be forced to jump through hoops in order to get the benefits they deserve."

"I am extremely disappointed by Commissioner Astrue's decision to close the Bristol Social Security Office," Lieberman said. "Consolidating this office with the New Britain office would be a tremendous

burden on seniors in our state. Earlier this year, Senator Dodd, Representative Larson and I met Commissioner Astrue to hear the agency's budget concerns, and we responded by working in the House and the Senate to increase the budget for the Social Security Administration. In view of these facts, I urge Commissioner Astrue to reconsider this decision.

The City of Bristol and the landlord of the local Social Security office stand ready to assist the Social Security Administration in any way to keep the office open.

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