

Human Services Committee  
Public Hearing, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
S.B. 1273 (Raised), An Act Concerning Respite Care Services For Caretakers of Persons  
With Alzheimer's Disease

Testimony of Elinor Wilber, Connecticut Chapter, Alzheimer's Association

Senator Harris and Representative Villano and members of the Human Services  
Committee

My name is Elinor Wilber, a former caregiver, former legislator, advocate and volunteer  
with the Alzheimer's Association.

I am here to speak in favor of S.B. 1273 that would increase the funding level for the  
state respite care program and increase the grant amounts available to eligible caregivers.  
This has been a very successful collaborative program between the Department of Social  
Services, the Connecticut Area Agencies on Aging and the Alzheimer's Association.

In the latest report by the AAA's between July 1, 2005 and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006 the program  
served over 700 clients with skilled management intervention. During that period, 556  
clients benefited from grants that allowed the use of adult day care centers, home health  
aide assistance and companion/ homemaker support among others. Most used adult day  
care (49%), companion/homemaker used (34%) and home aide used (22%).

Unfortunately, because of demographics, (a rapidly growing aging population), the  
incidence of this disease will increase and the need to provide quality care in the home as  
long as possible as an alternative to say a nursing home is good public policy.

There are 68,000 people who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in  
Connecticut. There are approximately 200,000 caregivers who provide the love and care  
in home settings. These caregivers who are in a stressful day to day environment require  
our help and the respite care program has shown to be a very cost effective tool.

The need for an increased funding level to \$5 M is justified by the demographic  
explosion and the grant amount increase represents a bare bone level of care. The  
program has been a model of good public policy because it benefits the caregiver, it  
benefits the person with Alzheimer's by keeping that person home longer and it benefits  
the Connecticut taxpayer because home care is considerably less expensive than an  
institutional one.

We ask your support of S.B. 1273 and thank you.