

**Testimony by Patty O'Brian to the Human Services Committee in Support of Raised Bill No. 5793 an act concerning grants for respite care services for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease.**

**March 4, 2008**

Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Patty O'Brian and I am on the Public Policy Committee for the Alzheimer's Association and a program director for The Atrium at Rocky Hill an assisted living for the memory impaired.

**I am here today to testify in support of Raised Bill No. 5793 Act concerning grants for respite care services for caretakers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease.**

I have had the honor and privilege of working with individuals and their caregivers who have been affected with Alzheimer's disease and Related Disorders over the past 17 years. During this time, I have had numerous individuals walk into my office and talk to me about how difficult it is to manage this disease.

In my experience, I have seen how respite services can delay the need for placement into a long term care facility, reduce number of doctor visits for the caregiver, and keep the individual with Alzheimer's in a more familiar setting.

At this moment, families can receive \$3,500 for respite care. If that individual was to stay in an assisted living at \$175.00 a day for respite, the family would have only 20 days of respite a year. With the increase to \$7,500, the family would have 42 days of respite a year. The extra days would allow a caregiver the much needed break and allow them to relax and be able to care for that loved one for a longer period of time. If an individual with Alzheimer's is not placed for 5 years in a long term facility, because their caregiver has had the

opportunity to rejuvenate. It could save the state over \$110,000 a year for a nursing home.

By increasing the maximum annual allocation from \$3500 to \$7500 per year, the program can help caregivers get the needed break and save the state nursing homes funds by delaying the need for long term placement.

Thank you.