

alzheimer's association

Good morning Senator Doyle, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Heather Sandler and I am a graduate student at UCONN's School of Social Work and an intern at the Alzheimer's Association of Connecticut as well as a Helpline volunteer.

I am here today to testify in support of **Raised Bill No. 989, An Act Concerning the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program.**

The Alzheimer's Association is a donor supported, non-profit organization serving the needs of families, health care professionals and those individuals who are affected with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Association provides information and resources, support groups, education and training, and a 24 hour, 7 day a week Helpline.

Currently in Connecticut there are approximately 70,000 residents who have Alzheimer's and related dementias with over 113,000 caregivers. Those caregivers, usually family, provide over 97 million hours of unpaid care that would equal over a billion dollars. The Respite program allows many of these families the time they need to keep their loved one home.

As a graduate student in social work I have been able to research and study the Alzheimer's Respite program. In the course of studying this program I found that it allows more people to remain in their homes for a longer period of time. Allowing the use of Personal Care Assistant services would make the Respite program more flexible to more families. It is a cost effective alternative to the current services covered in Respite, including home health aide, homemaker/companion, skilled nursing care or short term

nursing care. A family using the Personal Care Assistant service will pay approximately \$552 per week as compared to \$950 a week for a skilled nursing facility, if the person is on Medicaid. Therefore, allowing the use of a Personal Care Assistant can provide a family with a longer period of Respite due to the cost savings. It will allow the average grant size of \$3500 to provide approximately six weeks of Respite with Personal Care Assistant Services compared to three and a half weeks of Respite care in a skilled nursing facility.

The Alzheimer's Respite Grant is an important program to families coping with the emotional and physical stress they face everyday. The expansion of services to include Personal Care Assistants is paramount to keep these families from falling apart and their loved one being placed out of the home.

The Alzheimer's Association supports adding Personal Care Assistant services to the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program and Raised Bill 989.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be willing to answer any questions that you might have for me.