TESTIMONY
of
John M Whitcomb

Before the Aging Committee
of the
Connecticut General Assembly

February 16, 2010

Chairpersons Sen. Prague, Rep. Serra and Honorable Members of the Aging Committee; my name is John M Whitcomb and I live in Danbury. I am here today to testify **in support** of H.B. 5111, **An Act Concerning the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program.**

I am here in the role of citizen, taxpayer and as a believer in limited government and fiscal control; also I am a supporter of the Alzheimer's Association. As a past member of the State Contracting Standards Board and a Trustee on the State Board of Academic Awards (Charter Oak and the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium), I understand the difficult choices you need to make.

Expenditures supporting the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program will **SAVE** money for the state. My wife died last year from advanced early onset Alzheimer's disease. Her health care also impacted my ability to have any serious gainful employment in a period that should have been peak earning and saving years. We have been private payers, and not covered under Title XIX, although my wife was disabled under Social Security.

Without respite care, similarly situated Connecticut residents can expect the financially devastating experience of nursing home care. Eventually, the state WILL pick up full nursing home costs for such bankrupt citizens.

Respite care is one way to help delay that inevitability, and is FAR less expensive than the alternative. A caregiver knows a nursing home will easily use up $100,000 in assets a year. It just comes down to "how long can nursing home admission be delayed"; which equates to both taxpayer savings and a better quality of life for the disabled.

In my case, Respite Care and the adult daycare facility in our town allowed us to avoid nursing home admission. Clearly the State avoided paying for nursing home expense by making the minimal investment in respite care. Please recognize that expenditure on the Respite Care Program is unlike other budget expenditures. By supporting Respite Care, you can save taxpayer money while retaining an important program.

Thank you for listening to reasons that I support this program, and thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions. If you have questions or concerns at a future date please do not hesitate to contact me.

John M Whitcomb, Taxpayer