

alzheimer's association™

Statement in Support of Raised SB 354, An Act Concerning Biomedical Research Trust Fund Research Grants Before the Appropriations Committee

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On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association, we thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. The Alzheimer's Association is the leading national voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research and we are always a resource for you.

The 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. We provide information and resources, support groups, education and training, and a 24-hour, 7 Day a week Helpline.

Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Therefore, the Alzheimer's Association strongly supports SB 354 to add Alzheimer's disease and diabetes to the diseases allowed in research made from the Biomedical Research Trust Fund.

Projections are for a large increase in the Baby Boomer generation. Currently in Connecticut there are approximately 70,000 residents who have Alzheimer's and related dementias. The state needs to prepare for this epidemic, which is quickly becoming the country's biggest, broadest and most expensive problem to families, businesses and the healthcare system.

One of the priorities of our National Office is The Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act (S.1492/H.R.3286), which calls for \$2 billion in research funding for Alzheimer's at the National Institutes of Health and authorizes the necessary resources to pursue better diagnosis, prevention and treatment.

Alzheimer's is the seventh leading cause of death. While Alzheimer's deaths increased by nearly 50% from 2000-2006, the deaths from heart disease and cancer declined during the same time period. At the NIH, cancer is funded at \$6 billion, \$3.7 billion for heart disease, and Alzheimer's has been flat-funded for 6 years at \$428 million.

Although the greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's is increasing age, another risk factor is family history. Research has shown that those who have a parent, brother or sister, or child with Alzheimer's are more likely to develop Alzheimer's. The risk increases if more than one family member has the illness. When diseases tend to run in families, either heredity (genetics) or environmental factors or both may play a role.

Age, family history and heredity are all risk factors we can't change. However, **research** is beginning to reveal clues about other risk factors we may be able to influence. The risk of developing Alzheimer's or vascular dementia appears to be increased by many conditions that damage the heart or blood vessels. These include high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, **diabetes** and high cholesterol.

Research is finding that both Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia may be linked to diabetes. Type 2 diabetes can also harm the brain. Compared to people without diabetes, more people with diabetes get dementia.

We need to devote increased resources to control and conquer these diseases. Therefore, The Connecticut Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association strongly supports Raised SB 354 and urges its passage.