

**TESTIMONY
Of
Michael K. Tobin
Before the Appropriations Committee
Of The
Connecticut General Assembly**

March 4, 2011

Chairpersons Senator Toni Harp and Representative Toni Walker and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Michael Tobin. I am here today to testify in support of continuation of the line-item funding for the Respite Care Program. The focus of my testimony will address a lesser acknowledged impact of dementia, that of Early Onset Alzheimer's. This aspect of the disease affects persons ages 45 to 65, and the affects of this form carry a different burden to a family dynamic. The scenario may involve two working spouses, as well as minor children. This form of dementia is genetic, is passed on through generations, and usually comprises around 10% of the total cases.

I speak from personal experience, as my wife was diagnosed with Early Onset in 2004. (Age 49, passing away in 2008 at age 53) She was employed as a High Guidance Counselor until 2003, when she had to resign. My two sons were age 10 at the time of the diagnosis.

I was at the Department of Transportation in New Haven as a newly appointed Maintenance Manager, of which I have recently retired from. And so began the burden of being functional in my managerial capacity, and having to become literally a single parent, as my wife was mentally incapable of caring for my sons. This being compounded by issues of who would care for my wife during my working hours. At the time, her case

was monitored by the Adler Geriatric Center at Yale-New Haven Hospital. During my consultation with a Nurse Manager, I was made aware of the respite grants at which time it was suggested that applications be submitted. Grants were received, and my wife was able to go into adult day care for 5 days a week at the Goodwin Levine Adult Day Care in New Haven. The grants rolled over every year, 2004 to 2006, when it became necessary for nursing home care. At the time, the financial assistance provided only a short term coverage for her care, but it enabled her to be socialized and stimulated during my work time. In summary, the Respite Care Program allowed me to keep working, and to be free of concern for her welfare during daytime hours.

Thank you for listening to my story and my reasons for supporting the respite care program, and for the opportunity to testify before you this evening. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time. Please feel free to contact me at any time with any future concerns or questions.

Michael K. Tobin