

FTR

Testimony of Sharon Scully before the Appropriations Committee

February 22, 2013

Senator Toni Harp, Representative Toni Walker and members of the committee, my name is Sharon Scully, and I am here to testify in support of the Connecticut Alzheimer's Statewide Respite program.

This program offers relief to stressed caregivers by providing information, support and the development of an appropriate plan of care, and services for the individual with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. I beg you to not cut funding to this vital program.

I was an Assistant Attorney General 4, expert trial lawyer, which is the highest level for a litigator in the AG's Office. I loved my job and coworkers and I loved representing the State of Connecticut at home and at the federal courts. I was a confident and strong litigator and an Appellate lawyer, until Alzheimer's claimed me at the age of 55.

At first, I thought that menopause was the culprit. Then I attributed it to my forgetfulness to adrenal fatigue because of my work load.

The AG's Office knew something was wrong and requested that I get neuropsychological testing.

After 12 hours of NeuroPsych testing I was diagnosed with early onset of Alzheimer's dementia. We had two children and the worst day of our lives was when we had to tell our 16 year old son and 18 year old daughter that I had this disease. It was devastating to our family.

I told my husband Ray that he could divorce me. He looked at me and told me that he would take care of me and love me forever, and he would have, but he died of cancer on July 4, 2013.

There are over 70,000 people in Connecticut over 65 years old with Alzheimer's disease. I am one of the thousands of younger people with this disease, and I worry about how my family will take care of me for possibly the next 30 years. Without support, I may end up in a skilled nursing facility, instead of the warmth of my family's care. Respite programs like this provide vital support to families as they struggle with the daily loss of their loved one's cognitive abilities.

I beg you to support and fund this program.

Thank you.

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