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Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, I am pleased to offer testimony on behalf of proposed **H.B. No. 5979**:

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.**

*To create a task force to develop a comprehensive, strategic plan to address the Alzheimer's epidemic.*

Today, an estimated 5.4 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, and that number is projected to total up to 16 million by the middle of this century. The burden this devastating disease is placing — and will place — on state budgets, long-term care infrastructure and the health care system is enormous. States must not only deal with today's crisis but must be prepared for the worsening crisis of tomorrow.

State Government Alzheimer's Disease Plans (state plans) create the infrastructure and accountability necessary to build dementia-capable programs for the growing number of people with the disease. These plans prepare states to address a range of issues, including:

- *quantifying the number of individuals with Alzheimer's in a state;*
- *availability of diagnostic services;*
- *dementia-capable support services for people at all stages of the disease;*
- *Medicaid coverage of long-term care for people with Alzheimer's; and*
- *safety of individuals with Alzheimer's who wander.*

A comprehensive state strategy to address the needs of individuals with Alzheimer's disease provides a mechanism to consider all of these issues collectively. The process of strategy creation involves bringing to the table such parties as: state agencies; legislators; residential and community care providers; professional and family caregivers; and persons with Alzheimer's disease. Using this approach, state governments can address the Alzheimer's epidemic with a thoughtful, integrated and cost-effective approach.

Please support the creating a task force to develop a comprehensive, strategic plan to address the Alzheimer's epidemic. Thank you for your consideration.

With every good wish,

John K. Hampton