



Connecticut

Aging Committee

February 25, 2016

Testimony of AARP Volunteer Jean Caron in Support of
Raised Senate Bill #165, *AA Expanding Eligibility for the Alzheimer's Disease Respite Care Program*

Good morning Chairpersons Flexer and Serra, ranking members Kelly and Bolinsky and other members of the Aging Committee.

My name is Jean Caron. I am an AARP volunteer and a family caregiver for my 96-year old mother, who thankfully, is able to live at home with the help of services provided under the CT Home Care Program for Elders.

As family caregiver, I know that the pressure on family caregivers is immense. And, our time is rarely our own. That's why today, I volunteered to give voice to a fellow caregiver—William—who could not be here, but wants to highlight how crucial the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program is in his life.

William's wife has early onset Alzheimer's disease and he currently receives services through the State Wide Alzheimer's Respite Care program. Thanks to this program, family caregivers like William have access to adult day care and other forms of respite.

His wife has been able to have a surprisingly positive experience while attending adult day care three times a week. The services give her give her an optimistic and energizing experience. She can socialize with other people and engage with peers. Without this program William says that his wife would be relegated to a "very dreary life of watching TV, sitting in place and fall quicker into further dementia induced loss of being."

When his wife is at adult day care, William takes the opportunity to do household chores and catch up on family business and work on a part time basis. His part-time job helps bring in some financial assets to somewhat offset the weekly expenses.

Without funding from the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, William could not afford to utilize the adult day services. His wife would be robbed of that brief escape from the sadness. She would relapse back into dark days without any social interaction or stimulation.

On behalf of William and over 450,000 family caregivers in Connecticut, I ask you to use your influence and advocacy to maintain and expand essential respite services for family caregivers. The Alzheimer's Respite Care Program can deliver hope and dignity to family caregivers and loved ones with dementia or Alzheimer's Disease; let's make sure it is available to all those who need it! Thank you.