

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY
Of
Michael Tobin
Before the Aging Committee
Of The
Connecticut General Assembly
Raised Bill No. 165**

February 25, 2016

Chairpersons Senator Mae Flexer, Representative Joseph Serra and Honorable Members of the Aging Committee, my name is Michael Tobin. Representing the Alzheimer's Association as a volunteer Ambassador to Rep. Rosa DeLauro, I am here today to testify in support of expanding eligibility for the Alzheimer's Disease Respite Care Program. The focus of my testimony will address a lesser acknowledged impact of dementia, that of Younger Onset Alzheimer's. This aspect of the disease affects persons ages 45 to 65, and the effects of this form carry a different burden to a family dynamic.

I speak from personal experience, as my wife was diagnosed with Younger Onset in 2004. (Age 49, passing away in 2008 at age 53) My two sons were age 10 at the time of the diagnosis.

This was being compounded by issues of who would care for my wife during my working hours. At the time, her case was monitored by Yale-New Haven Hospital. During my consultation with a Case Manager, I was made aware of the respite grants through the New Haven Agency on Aging, 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.

The grants rolled over every year, from 2004 to 2006, when it became necessary for nursing home care and Title 19. 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 hours. In summary, the Respite Care Program allowed me to keep working, and to be free of concern for her welfare during the daytime hours.

Since that time, the demand and requirements for additional respite care services has become urgent. The statewide increase of new diagnoses is becoming staggering. The funding levels of 10 years ago are insufficient, due to inflation, to even adequately meet the needs of new clients.

Thank you for listening to my story and my reasons for supporting expanded eligibility for the Alzheimer's Disease Respite Care Program, and for the opportunity to testify before you today. 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.

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