



# Connecticut

Aging Committee

February 25, 2016

Testimony of AARP Volunteer Rich Bright 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 Rich Bright. I am an AARP volunteer from Seymour and I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today to express AARP's strong support for the Statewide Alzheimer's Respite Care program and funding to expand the program.

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with an age 50+ membership of nearly 38 million nationwide, and approximately 600,000 here in Connecticut. We fight for issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, family caregiving and independent living.

Over the past several years, AARP has raised its attention and its ever increasing commitment to support family caregivers. Last year, thanks to the incredible bipartisan leadership of this Committee, we enacted the CARE Act to provide notification and training for family caregivers when a loved one transitions home from the hospital. Thank you for that support! This year, we again need your advocacy to protect and expand the Statewide Alzheimer's Respite Care program.

Respite is a major, unmet need for family caregivers. Specifically, the Alzheimer's Respite Care program provides a hard-earned break to families providing care to a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. The program is a life-saver for family caregivers, who are on call 24/7 and stretched thin balancing work, medical appointments, household management and other family obligations. We appreciate your efforts to expand and protect this vital caregiver support.

AARP's Public Policy Institute estimates that family caregivers in Connecticut provide 465,000 million hours of care for an aging parent or loved one, helping them to live independently in their own homes. The care that these family caregivers provide in Connecticut amounts to an estimated \$5.9 billion per year. These family caregivers carry a huge responsibility.

**Raised Senate Bill #165 AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESPITE CARE PROGRAM** would increase the income limit for the Statewide Alzheimer's Respite Care Program to \$50,000 annually and allow more individuals to benefit from the services. In addition to increasing eligibility, AARP urges the legislature to provide the funding needed to protect current beneficiaries and expand services to newly eligible families.

When family caregivers are adequately supported they have a better chance of keeping their loved ones safe at home. AARP asks you to protect and strengthen the Statewide Alzheimer's Respite Care program. Thank you!