

February 10, 2016

**RE: Protect and Preserve Funding for the Connecticut Statewide Respite Care Program**

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

As I observe the Governor's recommended budget cut, I am extremely concerned with regards to additional budget reductions to the State Department on Aging Programs for Senior Citizens which will impact the Connecticut Statewide Respite Care Program.

- The Connecticut Statewide Respite Care Program provides relief to family caregivers who have limited financial resources and are enduring the many stresses connected with maintaining the independence of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.
- A typical use of respite funding is to provide temporary supervision of their loved one so that the caregiver can maintain their own well-being by visiting their own doctor.
- Often times, those with Alzheimer's disease or their caregivers are suffering from other illnesses, so the respite is not "just for Alzheimer's."
- This is not the type of welfare program where we hear about fraud and abuse of privilege. There are strong controls in place to make sure that every dollar goes to someone with a real need.
- The Program is administered in tight partnership between the CT Department on Aging, the Alzheimer's Association, and many others in the health care community, to ensure that we reach the constituents with a real need.

You will notice that there are a limited number of personal live testimonies during the hearings. In case it's not obvious, this is because they can't get away from their caregiving duties.

I am not a caregiver nor do I have the disease; however, I know caregivers and I know people with the disease. As a taxpayer, I am advocating on their behalf.

I encourage your leadership and active support in preserving the funds for the respite care program and ensuring that additional reductions are not implemented. Please fight to help seniors live independently and for the unpaid family caregivers who make it possible for them to stay in their homes.

Please reject the misguided reductions to the Statewide Respite Care Program.

Thank you,



Marissa Crean  
5 Lenox Drive  
Glastonbury, CT 06033