



Good morning Senator Flexer, Representative Serra, ranking members Kelly and Bolinsky and members of the Aging Committee. My name is Maureen McIntyre and I am the Executive Director of the North Central Area Agency on Aging. I am here today to give voice to the struggles of one of the many family caregivers served by the CT Statewide Respite Program. She is concerned about the effects of additional budget reductions to this valuable program and she will attest to the need to enroll more consumers – not fewer.

I'd like to introduce you to Ellie Candelaria and her husband Jaime.

Jaime is 60 years old and was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease when he was only 54. Before his diagnosis, Jaime was a talented handy man, he knew a little bit of everything, he was an electrician, a mechanic, a carpenter, and he loved welding. He also enjoyed helping others. He was the guy with the plow that could get you out of a jam and he would shovel out his elderly friends and neighbors in need. At one time a care provider, Jaime is now a care recipient. He needs assistance with bathing and dressing, supervision with toileting, and like many individuals with Alzheimer's disease, he is increasingly agitated at night which limits the amount and quality of Ellie's sleep.

Ellie is 65 years old and works full time at a job that she really enjoys. Her co-workers are supportive and understand her work/family situation but she is absolutely exhausted and completely stressed out because she is essentially working two full time jobs. When her job in the city ends, she goes home to care for her husband. She worries about getting sick and what would happen to Jaime if she was no longer there. She also worries about the toll that this taking on their daughter Sasha.



22 year old Sasha was at one point enrolled in college but she left school in order to return home to help her mom. She has since enrolled in on-line classes and is also working a small part time job to help pay the bills. She works from 5 – 8 AM and Ellie works from 8AM to 5PM. Together they tag team the overnight while Sasha tries to keep up with her studies and while Ellie tries to get some sleep.

Make no mistake, Ellie and Sasha are an incredible team. But they cannot keep this up forever and they cannot do it alone.

Under the CT Statewide Respite Program, Jaime originally attended Adult Day Care five days per week until he needed more care than they could provide. Then the family was able to hire a friend to provide in-home care under our self-directed option which allowed Sasha some respite during the day. By now, they have exhausted their annual allocation and are waiting anxiously until July for the next year's funding to begin. Our agency's care managers are working with Ellie to identify any and all resources but their options are limited. CT's best long term care option, the CT Home Care Program for Elders will not be available to Jaime for another 5 years. An eternity to Ellie and Sasha.

I told Ellie that I would be here today to share her story and I asked her if there was any message in particular that I could deliver for her. She said that the program "has been of great help and that they are thankful". She says that her husband "did not choose to be like this, and that for His reason God chose Jaime and they have no choice but to accept him this way. They love him [Jaime] and this is how life works".

I know that I am a poor stand-in for Ellie Candelaria but I hope that you will remember her story and the critical role of Statewide Respite Program in supporting family caregivers in their time of need.

Thank you so much for your time and attention