

# Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-158

AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Title:** RESPITE CARE PROGRAM.

**Vote Date:** 3/15/2018

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/1/2018

**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following Joint Favorable Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Aging Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This is an act to expand the eligibility for the Alzheimer's Disease Respite Care Program. Respite is a major need for caregivers of a family member with dementia. They are often on call 24/7. When these caregivers are adequately supported they can avoid burnout and keep their loved ones safe at home.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Amy Porter, Commissioner, Department of Rehabilitation Services, State of Connecticut:** The agency is proud to provide assistance of such great value, but due to economic and budget realities facing our state, they cannot support the proposal. They believe the people whose resources are so limited and are the greatest users of this program may be negatively affected.

**Steven Hernandez, Esq., Executive Director, Commission on Women, Children and Seniors:** Supports this bill. This bill would provide the much needed relief to home based care givers. Dementia can take away ones memories but not the concern and desire of family to care for their loved ones at home.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Iris Rivera-Acosta, Volunteer, AARP Connecticut:** Supports the bill that would increase access to the Alzheimer's Respite Care program.

**Erin Mahoney, Caregiver, Alzheimer’s Association, Southington, CT:** Supports this bill *with adequate funding levels*. Ms. Mahoney’s testimony is her own personal story of her mother’s early on-set Alzheimer’s disease and how the Respite program continues to help her family.

**Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut:** Strongly supports the program *and any effort to increase funding*. Ms. Morelli notes if eligibility is expanded without increased funding, then current recipients would receive less funds and less services.

**Mike Supchak, Volunteer, AARP Connecticut:** In addition to expanding eligibility, “AARP *urges the legislature to provide the funding needed to protect the current beneficiaries...* This includes the Governor’s rescission to Programs for Senior Citizens which funds the Alzheimer’s Respite Care program.”

**Christie Kovel, Director of Public Policy, Alzheimer’s Association Connecticut Chapter:** Ms. Kovel supports expanding the eligibility of this program along *with adequate funding to meet the growing need*.

**Robin Roscillo, Wilton, CT:** Supports the bill.

**Mary-Kay Harrity, Norwalk, CT:** Supports the bill. Her mother is 98 years old, declining more rapidly now, but still being maintained at home. Respite programs make home care possible.

**Melissa Zagaroli, Bachelor of Social Work Program, Southern Connecticut State University:** Supports this bill. Ms. Zagaroli has seen firsthand how individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer’s are often placed in facilities due to the lack of funding services for family and caregivers.

**Sarah Cartier, Bachelor of Social Work Program, Southern Connecticut State University:** Supports this bill. Ms. Cartier’s grandfather was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s six years ago. Her father has been his caregiver with little assistance from respite caregivers. This has put an enormous strain on him financially and emotionally.

**Emily Rioux, Bachelor of Social Work Program, Southern Connecticut State University:** Supports the bill. Ms. Rioux’s testimony is based on her own experience caring for a family member with Alzheimer’s disease. For four years she was unable to hold a job and had to prioritize her grandmother’s needs before her class schedule. She was unable to receive respite care and became very burnt-out.

**Samantha Thuotte, Bachelor of Social Work Program, Southern Connecticut State University:** Supports the bill. Ms. Thuotte is an intern at Branford Hills Healthcare Center. She passionately notes she is advocating for the caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease. She lost her grandfather to the disease in a long term care facility due to lack of family funds to keep him home.

**April Meadows, Bachelor of Social Work Program, Southern Connecticut State**

**University:** Supports the bill. Ms. Meadows is currently an intern at a skilled nursing facility. She notes that nine times out of ten a family member is placed in a facility because their family does not have the means to provide the care their loved one needs to stay at home.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None submitted.

**Reported by: Diane Arroyo**

**Date: 03/27/2018**