

February 21, 2021

Senator Slap, Representative Phipps, members of the Aging Committee, my name is Erin Mahoney and I am a volunteer advocate with the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter. I am also a former caregiver to my mother who had younger-onset Alzheimer's disease and passed away from the disease in 2018.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the following raised bill:

Raised Bill #900: AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR AGING IN PLACE INITIATIVES

My mother was diagnosed with younger-onset Alzheimer's in 2012 at age 58, but her condition took a drastic turn for the worse in 2015-2016. At that time, it became very clear that neither myself nor my father were in a position of being able to tend to my mother 24/7 any longer, and the minimal family respite support we had been receiving was no longer adequate, as my mother's symptoms became more severe. Through my own research I found out about the Alzheimer's Respite Care program. We applied, and then were approved. With the respite care grant, my mother had been able to attend an adult day care program, going four days a week, four hours a day over the course of almost a year (my mother subsequently received home care assistance in her final year of life). The 16 hours a week that my mother was at the program allowed my father to tend to his home, run errands – all of which he could no longer do with my mother, go to his doctor's appointments and attend to his own health needs, and had given him an overall much needed break as her primary caregiver. It also gave us the peace of mind of knowing my mother was being well-taken care of at that point in the disease progression.

The Alzheimer's Disease Respite Care Program provides those with Alzheimer's the opportunity to stay in the community, and it provides their caregivers a much-needed break. I know from first hand experience that being a caregiver to someone with Alzheimer's is physically, mentally, and emotionally taxing and becomes nearly impossible to do on one's own as the disease progresses. That is why I am in support of this bill which adds additional funding to the Respite Care Program so more family caregivers can receive the much-needed help while caring for a loved one at home who has Alzheimer's or other dementia.

Thank you for your time.

