

To: Chair Dave Carpenter and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Linda Wyatt

Subj: Testimony for House Hearing on SB 88 Long-Term Care Ombudsman Dementia Training Bill

Testifying in written form only.

I am a 79 year-old female caregiver taking care of my male spouse, who is 80 in Wichita, KS. He was diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment in 2018, dementia in 2019 and told patterns and testing indicate Alzheimer's in 2020. I will try to keep my loved one in his home as long as I possibly can. Doesn't everyone want to remain in their home? However, I realize it is not if, but when, that he will likely need long-term care outside of our home.

When I learned we were "headed down this road," I began educating myself about dementia in order to become the best caregiver for a loved one with dementia I could be as he deserves the best care, dignity and respect that can be offered by me, his advocate.

How did I do this? I read a lot, began going to Alzheimer's Assn. support groups, availed myself of their educational programs, and then trained to become a facilitator of my own support group. In addition, I attended the Kansas Education Conference on Dementia each year which gives CEUs.

As a taxpayer, I expect the same kind of pursuit of education and dementia training for our Long-Term Care Ombudsman. You see, one cannot do an adequate job advocating for someone in memory care unless they are trained to fully understand dementia. It isn't just a "nice to have," it's a "MUST HAVE."

I am praying on behalf of all family caregivers that you will support excellence in education and dementia training for our Long-Term Care Ombudsman as the people they will represent deserve that dignity and respect. This needs to start tomorrow.

Thank you kindly.

Linda Wyatt