

Chair Carpenter and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Ruth Burress and I am testifying as a proponent of SB 88 – Requiring Dementia Training for the State Long Term Care Ombudsman’s Office.

My sister-in-law has been diagnosed with Early Onset Alzheimer’s and is currently a resident of a Long-Term Care facility. She is 58 and has been a resident for the past two years.

She is still very active and appears healthy, but has no short-term memory and is unable to do things for herself, such as dressing appropriately and taking care of personal hygiene. Sometimes her needs aren’t taken care of because she appears to be very capable of caring for herself. Alzheimer’s can often be misunderstood if there is no training regarding how to deal with the unique challenges presented by an Alzheimer’s or dementia diagnosis.

Additional dementia specific training regarding Alzheimer’s and other dementias for the State Long Term Care Ombudsman’s Office would help with the understanding of the challenges that Alzheimer’s and other dementia’s present. There are specific challenges and communication needs regarding those with dementia, and understanding those needs is crucial to be able to effectively advocate for their rights and to address concerns relating to their care.

I urge the committee to support SB 88.

If you have additional questions, I will stand for them at the appropriate time.

Thank you for your time.

Ruth Burress