



**Please accept the following as testimony on behalf of the ARC Senior Respite Program.**

My name is Steve Lorberbaum and I am the owner of Assisting Hands Home Care. We are a private duty home care company located in Montgomery County. We provide personal care and companion care services for seniors and those with disabilities. We often work with families where an older family member (85 to 90 plus) is caring a person with either physical or mental limitations. The toll it takes on those primary senior caregivers is enormous both in terms of the physical demands as well as the mental exhaustion of having to "do it all."

The ARC Senior Respite Program is a much-needed lifeline for family members who are both emotionally and physically exhausted from caring for their family members. They often are up day and night worried about or caring for their loved one and forego their own health needs, including missing doctor's appointments and prescription refills. They have no time for simple self-care activities, even taking a little break to take a walk outside.

One hundred forty hours per year (which is only 12 hours a month) allows family members to rest, recoup and recharge for the ongoing care that's needed after the break. Even reducing the program by 20 hours will significantly impact the benefits the program provides to these overwhelmed family members. Having the ability to call in professional caregivers not only gives them a break but also provides the ability to be educated on safe caregiving techniques and home safety evaluations to ensure a safe living environment. Companies like Assisting Hands are uniquely qualified to help advise families on simple changes to a home environment as well as providing information and resources to help make care a bit less burdensome. I suspect that this program may also help reduce hospital visits by giving family members a break, so they do not need medical assistance.

I understand that in times of fiscal constraints cuts must be made, but I would encourage the council to maintain current levels for this lifeline program. Seniors face so many challenges on a fixed income, food insecurity, deferred home maintenance and the trauma of watching a loved one physically and emotionally decline, reducing this program should not be something we add to their list of worries.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Lorberbaum", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Steve Lorberbaum

Owner

Assisting Hands of Potomac