

My name is Marsha Shomorin, I am sixty-eight years old, and I am the full-time caregiver for my ninety-two-year-old mother, who lives with dementia. Caring for her is an act of love, but it is also a responsibility that demands constant vigilance, physical labor, and emotional endurance. I am on duty every hour of every day. Respite services are the only support that allow me to continue caring for my mother while preserving my own health and dignity.

I am deeply troubled by the proposal to limit respite services to 120 hours per year. This proposal does not reflect the lived reality of caregiving. Dementia care does not pause, take weekends off, or become less demanding with time—it intensifies. Even the current respite allocation falls far short of meeting real needs. Reducing it further would place caregivers like me in an impossible position.


Caregivers need consistent, predictable, and sufficient respite. Sporadic or severely limited hours are not meaningful relief—they are barely a pause in an unrelenting responsibility. Without adequate support, caregivers are pushed beyond their limits. Burnout is not a theoretical risk; it is a very real and very human consequence of being asked to do too much with too little help.

When caregivers reach exhaustion, the outcomes are devastating. People are forced into emergency placements, preventable hospitalizations occur, and housing stability is lost. These situations are traumatic for families and far more expensive for the system than providing proper respite services in the first place. Preventive support is humane, responsible, and fiscally wise.

I urge you not only to reject reductions to respite services, but to increase funding for the respite program so it can truly support caregivers who are holding families together every day. Respite care is not a luxury. It is a lifeline. Please consider the real human cost of inadequate support and invest in the caregivers who make it possible for their loved ones to remain safely at home.

Respectfully,

Marsha Shomorin

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