

March 17, 2025

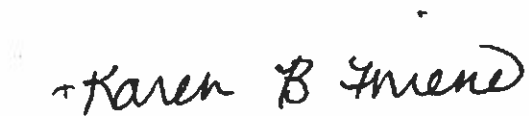
The Honorable Susan R. Donovan, Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and members of the Health and Human Services committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Karen Friend, and I am a senior researcher and evaluator at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, as well as an adjunct professor at the Brown University Department of Public Health. I was also the primary caregiver for my late spouse, Jacob Vinton.

Jake died in 2016 from early onset Alzheimer's Dementia. Jake was an athlete, engineer, and drummer, and had an enormous number of family members and friends, both here in Rhode Island and around the country. In hindsight, we recognize that he had the illness in his 40's, even though he was only diagnosed in his early 50's in 2009. It would have been enormously advantageous if we could have secured an earlier diagnosis. He could have started treatments sooner, worked longer, and given me more time to prepare. As any of you know who has dealt with this illness first-hand, more time is critical for the person with the illness as well as their family. I respectfully urge you to support H.5619. This legislation helps address our state's Alzheimer's crisis by supporting early detection and helping families access critical information and resources earlier. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen B. Friend". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Karen B. Friend
Providence, RI