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2/14/2024

Rep. Arthur Corvese, Chair  
RI House Committee o Labor  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Subject: Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 7171 - Enhancing Equity and Accessibility in RI Lifespan Respite System of Services

Dear Chairman Corvese,

As a Kinship Adoptive Parent myself as well as on behalf of an organization that who is dedicated to long-term in-home care for our loved ones, we at The Village for Rhode Island Foster and Adoptive Families are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the initiatives outlined in the proposed House Bill No. 7171. This bill seeks to enhance equity and accessibility in Rhode Island's Lifespan Respite System of Services, a cause that aligns closely with our mission and values.

At The Village, our mission is to advocate for and provide resources to kinship caregivers, foster, and adoptive parents who meet the needs of caregivers like ourselves who are tirelessly caring for family and friends, including children and youth with special needs, adults with disabilities, and the elderly. We believe in the dedication of caregivers, the importance of partnerships and collaborations to advocate for caregivers and their loved ones, and the necessity of increasing the range of services and options available to families.

If you are currently providing care to someone with meals, medication, bathing, dressing, or any other daily tasks, you are a caregiver. We understand the challenges and rewards of caregiving, and we are committed to supporting you in your journey.

Rhode Island's efforts to expand its response to the growing population of families affected by Alzheimer's and related dementias are commendable. Through federal awards secured by the Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging and initiatives led by the Rhode Island Department of Health, significant progress is being made to make the state's system of home- and community-based services dementia-capable.

From evidence-based programming to support families living with dementia to training direct care professionals on best practices in dementia care, Rhode Island is taking proactive steps to improve early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's and related dementias. These initiatives are crucial in ensuring that caregivers have access to the support and resources they need to provide high-quality care to their loved ones.

House Bill No. 7171 represents another important step in the right direction. By expanding eligibility for temporary caregiver benefits, increasing the maximum duration of such benefits, and improving

financial assistance for caregivers, this legislation will provide much-needed relief to caregivers across Rhode Island.

We urge you to support House Bill No. 7171 and help ensure its passage for the benefit of all caregivers and their loved ones in our state. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of caregivers and those they care for.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Shannon Dos Santos  
Project Coordinator  
The Village for Rhode Island Foster and Adoptive Families