

From: [sharon whitewheeler](#)
To: [House Health and Social Services](#)
Subject: HB 308
Date: Saturday, February 12, 2022 1:03:24 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in regard to House Bill 308.

Although, in principle, disseminating information to the public about dementia is not a bad thing, I recognize that by now most people in this country are aware of what dementia is and the toll it takes on caregiver's and their families. We have Maria Shriver, Ronald Reagan and Robin Williams and their families among just a few who have been affected by this horrid disease to thank for getting the word out to the world.

Dementia awareness is not what caregiver's and their families need. The money tied to this bill would, I believe, be better served assisting caregiver's. This issue is personal to me as I am caring for a family member. The costs associated with caregiving are enormous. Assisted living homes, for example, are out of reach for many families in Alaska as are the costs for in-home care. Using this money to, for example, encourage and assist non-profits to open and staff affordable assisted living homes would have a much greater impact on the lives of Alaskan families. Using this money to increase the number of respite beds throughout the state would have a much more positive impact on Alaskans than would be receiving information about dementia. Using this money to provide case management services to families whose loved one is experiencing dementia, again, would be money better spent.

Lastly, while working for the state as an assisted living home licensing specialist I had the opportunity to persuade Hope Community Resources to operate an assisted living home for seniors in Barrow. It was the first home opened and operated by them to strictly serve seniors experiencing dementia and physical disabilities. I only bring this up to illustrate that I recognized a need and reached out to a well-run non-profit to fill that need. If I could do that surely there are others, perhaps even you dear reader, who would have the imagination and courage to "think outside the box" to address the unmet needs of those Alaskan's and their families who are dealing with this awful, awful disease.

Sincerely,

Sharon White-Wheeler
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