

## **Testimony on the Importance of Respite Care Funding**

I am a caregiver for my mother, someone who once cared for me in every way imaginable. Now our roles are reversed, and while caring for her is an act of love, it is also one of the hardest things I have ever done.

My days don't really end. They are filled with managing medications, appointments, personal care, and constant worry about her safety and comfort. I carry the emotional weight of watching someone I love change, while trying to stay strong for her. There are moments when exhaustion feels overwhelming physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Respite care gives me something priceless: the ability to breathe.

Because of this funding, I can step away for a few hours knowing my mother is in safe, compassionate hands. That short break allows me to rest, take care of my own health, and return to her with renewed patience and energy. Without respite care, I would have no choice but to push through exhaustion, and that is not sustainable for me or for her.

Respite care doesn't mean I love my mother any less. It means I want to continue caring for her with dignity, compassion, and strength. When caregivers are supported, our loved ones receive better care, and families are able to stay together longer.

This funding directly impacts our daily lives. It protects caregivers from burnout, helps keep loved ones at home, and preserves the dignity of both the caregiver and the person receiving care.

Please continue to support and expand respite care funding. Caregivers like me are doing this work out of love but love alone is not enough without support.

Thank you for listening and for recognizing how deeply respite care matters.

Erica Nikuze