

January 26, 2026

My name is Rosemary Trejo, and I am here today to urge you to continue and protect funding for Montgomery County's Respite Care program.

My mother, Maria Ruth, is an immigrant from El Salvador who is living with dementia. Like so many immigrants, she came to this country in pursuit of the American dream. She worked for many years, often in difficult circumstances, to provide for her family and to give her children opportunities she never had.

Today, she lives with me full time. I work as a nurse during the day, and outside of work hours, I am her full-time, unpaid caregiver. As her dementia has progressed, I began to worry constantly about her safety, especially the fear of leaving her home alone while I was at work. Like many family caregivers, I faced an impossible choice of either protecting my loved one or maintain my ability to work and support our household. That is where Easter Seals Adult Day Services, made possible through Montgomery County's Respite Care funding, changed our lives.

Thanks to this program, my mother has a safe place during the day where she receives compassionate care, socialization, and a sense of community. Due to this support, I can go to work with peace of mind, knowing that she is safe, engaged, and treated with dignity. The staff at Easter Seals care for her as if she were family, and for the first time in a long time, she truly looks forward to each day. That sense of belonging has been invaluable—not just for her, but for me as her caregiver.

Respite care is not a luxury. It is a lifeline. It allows unpaid family caregivers to continue working, avoid burnout, and keep their loved ones at home rather than in institutional settings. Yet demand for this program continues to exceed available resources, leaving families on waitlists or shut out entirely once funding runs out.

I am asking you to recognize the profound impact this funding has on real families like mine. Please continue to invest in respite care and in the lives of our older adults—who are among the most vulnerable members of our community and who deserve safety, dignity, and care.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to supporting families like mine.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Trejo