



House Criminal Justice Committee

Chairman George Lang, Vice Chairman Phil Plummer, and Ranking Member David Leland

Alzheimer's Association House Bill 441 Proponent Testimony

Testimony by: **Trey Addison, Director of Public Policy, Alzheimer's Association**

Good Afternoon and thank you, Chairman Lang, Vice-Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. My name is Trey Addison, the Director of Public Policy for the Alzheimer's Association here in Ohio. I advocate on behalf of the 220,000 individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia, and the more than 600,000 family caregivers in Ohio. I also represent the most comprehensive Alzheimer's and dementia service organization in the United States. The Alzheimer's Association funds research, works with families to support caregiver needs, provides a 24/7 Helpline, and works with individuals who have early-stage Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. In Ohio, the Alzheimer's Association serves thousands of families and individuals annually and provides support programs to all 88 counties in Ohio in partnership with the Area Offices on Aging.

The responsibility of serving Ohio's most vulnerable population is not something we take lightly. In 2019, we fought for the introduction and the eventual passing of Senate Bill 24, which established an Ohio Alzheimer's and Dementia State Task Force. Now, we are fighting for House Bill 441.

As Ohio's aging population continues to grow, the 220,000 individuals living with Alzheimer's and other dementia, is also expected to increase by more than 25%. This statistic is alarming in a number of ways. First, in Ohio, we will see our costs increase because Alzheimer's is the most expensive disease in America. Second, Alzheimer's does not have a cure or effective treatment, so we are going to face this foe until we find one. Lastly, and the reason why we are fighting so hard in Ohio to protect this growing vulnerable population, is 6 in 10 people with dementia

will wander. That fact alone is a potential for 132,000 interactions between someone living with Alzheimer's disease and an Ohio first responder. Wandering is just one symptom of Alzheimer's, so when coupled with agitation, and other behavioral symptoms it only increases the chances of an unintended and potentially dangerous interaction between Ohio's most vulnerable and a first responder.

Ohio must act now and be proactive in our approach to helping Ohio families and first responders with necessary training and insights that will prevent any negative interactions.

A person with Alzheimer's disease may not remember his or her name or address and can become disoriented, even in a familiar place. When someone with dementia is lost, it can lead to anxiety, hostility, and in some cases fear. This can lead to more aggressive behavior and severe agitation.

Knowing this horrific disease can cause these systems, we must equip our first responders with the tools and skills they need to help Ohio's most vulnerable. By codifying competency-based dementia training, Ohio stands with Oklahoma, South Carolina, Florida, and Virginia, and Indiana as States that are taking this issue seriously, by taking action.

House Bill 441 also addresses the COVID-19 crisis head-on. Our program teams across Ohio have seen an increased amount of wandering in communities throughout Ohio. The health and safety of individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia becomes increasingly at-risk and frightening as well as the secondary and tertiary risks associated with isolation such as being unaware that there is a crisis. This pandemic also creates unfortunate consequences of social distancing where Adult Protective Services may need to intervene to protect someone from elder abuse.

We urge the House Criminal Justice committee members to vote and pass House Bill 441 out of the committee and support this much-needed legislation when it goes to the full floor of the Ohio House.

Thank you,

Trey Addison

Director of Public Policy

Ohio Alzheimer's Association

