

Anta will say:

First of , let me say hello to all the fine Senator's and constituents. My name is Anita Sullins. I am 38 years of age and I am a quad or a quadriplegic if you want to get technical about it. I just wanted to say a quick word of hello and give to you my most sincere gratitude in hearing, both my mother and myself today. I had come here today, with the full intentions of reading to you from a new augmentative speech device. But, timing and funding, made that rather impossible. Perhaps, it's all for the best anyways. Technology has come a long way and I'll admit to not always being able to understand the digitized voice. I don't know how much better my phone's voice will be. I have written my speech for my mother to read to you. I hope it shows the passion and concern that I feel about the subject matter So, to speak to you on my behalf and without further delay, my mother, Corinza Cross.

Ten Corinza will follow with:

My daughter, Anita, was in an major automobile accident. It was caused by a hit and run driver. She suffered many life-changing injuries, not to mention that she was in a coma for months and now is a TOTAL CARE quadriplegic.

Like I said, she is a TOTAL CARE quadriplegic. That means, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, her care is provided by me! Not that I begrudge her in the least! It's not her fault life dealt her such a raw deal. Similar tragedy has happened to so many other families. I would give anything just to make her life better. The same feelings are shared by so many other parents and caregivers.

Anita, my daughter, does receive some financial assistance from Social Security and Florida based Medicaid and Medicare. But, even so, THAT is a minimum amount. For that help we are very grateful. But even so, that assistance is a minimal amount.

I have found that there is a total disarray or, to put it bluntly, a sheer lack of organization in the agencies that are supposed to provide guidance and information available to the public. When you ask the question " where can I get help for my over eighteen year old daughter that is severely handicapped " you are told that care benefits do not exist or simply are not available.

I, finally, was advised by an agent at the Agency for the Ageing office that there is a fund that will pay to compensate a family member/caregiver. BUT, I was dis-heartened to learn the length of time that it would take to receive I was told there is a 30,000 person waiting list. 30,000 people sounds like a real need exists. By your lack of action are you saying that " disabled people are not important", " or who

cares if they have to suffer" And, the only way to move forward on the list, is if someone ahead of you passes away. Then I must say, I was blown away, when I heard the amount of compensation. Are you ready for this? \$106.00 a month.

It's incredible that a responsible government would not see the advantage and savings of having a caring family member provide most of the needed basic care and provide a basic income for the in-home-based caregiver.

This is a much better solution than sending him or her to a "home".

I am a qualified caregiver. With many years of experience in the nursing field. I can not understand, how a state with as many Senior Citizens and Handicapped voters does not have, first the vision to centralize and modernize the information system for resources and services and second, to have a system that pays for family members to provide home-care instead of sending your loved one to a moderately skilled and rarely caring government funded facility or "home".