

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 22, 2007

Provide Full Authorized Funding for Respite Care Services

Dear Colleague:

On behalf of our nation's family caregivers, we urge you to join us in sending the attached letter to the Senate Budget Committee, requesting \$30 million in FY 2008; \$40 million for FY 2009; \$53.3 million for FY 2010; \$71.1 million for FY 2011; and \$94.8 million for FY 2012 in budget authority for the Lifespan Respite Care Act in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget resolution.

Chronic illnesses are the fastest growing illnesses in our country today, and older adults are the fastest growing population. Consequently, long-term care is increasingly important for our nation's health and constitutes a significant portion of Medicaid and Medicare spending. In 2004, approximately \$160 billion was spent on formal long-term care services; 42 percent paid for by Medicaid and 20 percent paid by Medicare. This is compared to the \$137 billion spent on formal long-term care in 2000.

However, a substantial amount of our nation's long-term care is voluntarily provided by family caregivers and is often unpaid. Family caregiving accounts for 80 percent of the long-term care provided in the United States at a value of more than \$300 billion annually. Respite care services provide temporary relief for caregivers and decrease the likelihood of formal long-term care, thereby resulting in significant savings for the health care system and taxpayers.

In addition, respite care has positive impacts on caregivers' professional lives and the U.S. economy. The majority of caregivers have outside employment in addition to their caregiving responsibilities at home. Research tells us that, because of the lack of support services, most caregivers either miss work or quit their jobs in order to meet the health needs of their family members. The consequent decrease in productivity results in a total estimated cost to U.S. employers of \$34 billion per year.

Last December, Congress and the Administration sent a clear message of support to family caregivers with enactment of the Lifespan Respite Care Act. Through competitive grants, the Lifespan Respite Care Act will expand access to respite care; improve local coordination of services; and help families obtain information on respite provider options and payment plans.

Enactment of this legislation is the culmination of many years of bipartisan effort and will have a significant impact on our nation's caregivers. We encourage you to join us in supporting family caregivers by signing onto the attached letter. Please contact Eleanore Edson with Senator Clinton (4-5650) or J.K. Robinson (4-4511) with Senator Warner if you have questions or would like to sign on.

Sincerely,

Hillary Rodham Clinton

John W. Warner

January 22, 2007

The Honorable Kent Conrad
The Honorable Judd Gregg
Senate Budget Committee
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Conrad & Ranking Member Gregg:

On behalf of the more than 50 million family caregivers in our nation, we ask you to include the full authorization amount of \$30 million in FY 2008; \$40 million for FY 2009; \$53.3 million for FY 2010; \$71.1 million for FY 2011; and \$94.8 million for FY 2012 in budget authority for the Lifespan Respite Care Act in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget resolution.

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Enactment of this legislation is the culmination of many years of bipartisan effort and will have a significant impact on our nation's caregivers. We appreciate your commitment to family caregivers and ask that you continue to support them by including the full authorized amount in the FY 2008 budget resolution.

Sincerely,

Hillary Rodham Clinton

John W. Warner