



# Durbin, Kaine Introduce Bill to Support Family Caregivers

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tim Kaine (D-VA) today introduced the *Supporting America's Caregivers and Families Act*, a bill that would increase funding, training, and support for the more than 34 million family caregivers in America. Each year caregivers provide more than \$470 billion worth of unpaid care—more than the entire federal Medicaid budget. The average caregiver spends \$7,000 of their own money every year to provide care to loved ones, with an average commitment of 24 hours per week. The strains of caregiving can deplete savings, impact employment, and increase emotional stress and physical health challenges. Durbin and Kaine's bill would bolster the nation's network of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), and enhance support for caregivers through skills building, resources and information, respite care, counseling, and other services.

**“Whether it’s Alzheimer’s Disease, the chronic care needs of an aging parent, or the emotional or physical health need of a child, tens of millions of Americans are pressed into service to care for their loved ones. As a society, we must do better job of valuing and uplifting the heroic job that our caregivers—the majority of whom are women—do every day in the face of heavy emotional and financial burdens,”** Durbin said. **“This bill will dramatically increase our commitment to caregivers by providing the resources, training, and support they need for themselves and the loved ones they assist.”**

**“Many caregivers are family members who are sacrificing time and income to provide support to loved ones battling Alzheimer’s and other chronic conditions. This bill is an effort to recognize the contributions of caregivers and provide the resources they need to support our aging communities,”** Kaine said.

The *Supporting America's Caregivers and Families Act* enhances the ability of AAAs, under the authority of the *Older Americans Act*, to support caregivers and those they serve by doing the following:

- **Increase funding:**Increases the funding authorization level for the National Family Caregiver Support Program (Title III-E of the Older Americans Act) from \$160.8 million to \$360 million.
- **Increase the use of caregiver assessments:** Directs the Secretary to establish a plan to increase the use of caregiver assessments, and creates a new technical assistance and resource center to share best practices. Eighty-four percent of caregivers report they could use additional information to provide care to loved ones. Increasing the use of caregiver assessments will help identify and address the health, financial, training, and skills that caregivers may need.
- **Enhance Partnerships with Health Payers:** Expand the ability of AAAs to receive funding from Medicare and Medicaid to provide case management and other services for seniors, which will increase funding for support services to seniors.

It is estimated that by the year 2030, 73 million—or one in five—people in America will be age 65 or older. Today, nearly 35 million Americans provide unpaid care to people aged 50 and older, the vast majority of whom are family members. At the same time, a growing number of grandparents and older relative caregivers are providing care to young children and adults with disabilities. Two out of five caregivers report high levels of emotional stress, while six in ten report that their own work has been affected by caregiving.

The *Supporting America's Caregivers and Families Act* is endorsed by: National Alliance for Caregiving, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), Alzheimer's Association, and Alzheimer's Impact Movement.