



National Alliance for Caregiving

Advancing Family Caregiving through Research, Innovation & Advocacy

The National Alliance for Caregiving Supports the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregiver Act

We at the National Alliance for Caregiving endorse the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act (S. 1028 and H.R. 3759). We applaud those who came together in a bipartisan fashion to support passage of this legislation in the Senate. It is now the time for Members of the House of Representatives to pass this legislation in the 115th Congress.

Family caregivers are the backbone of the long-term care system, especially for those living with serious conditions or life-threatening illnesses. In simple terms, a family caregiver is someone who is unpaid but responsible for attending to the daily physical, emotional and often financial support of another person who is unable to care for him/herself due to illness, injury or disability. The care recipient may be a family member, life partner, or friend. In fact, nearly 44 million family caregivers provide about \$470 billion annually in unpaid care to those in need. They take on challenges that impact their health, emotional wellbeing, and financial security. They help make it possible for older adults and people with disabilities to live independently in their homes and communities.

The National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP research study *Caregiving in the U.S. 2015* found that twenty two percent of caregivers felt their health had gotten worse as a result of caregiving. One in five caregivers reported a high level of physical strain resulting from caregiving, while two in five consider their caregiving situation to be emotionally stressful. These difficulties are further compounded by a lack of formal recognition from the health care system. Only one third of caregivers have ever had a health care provider—such as a doctor, nurse, or social worker—ask about what was needed to care for their care recipient. Staggeringly, only sixteen percent of caregivers say a health care provider has asked what *they* need to take care of themselves.

All too often, family caregivers are not recognized and included in appropriate health and social service programs and are not receiving the care and support they require to serve in this role. A national strategy is necessary to effectively recognize the needs of all family caregivers, provide them with support, and include them in appropriate care models. The RAISE Family Caregivers Act would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a strategy to support family caregivers by establishing an advisory body to bring together representatives from both the private and public sectors to advise and make recommendations. This bill would implement the federal Commission on Long-Term Care's bipartisan recommendation that Congress require the development of a strategy to support family caregivers and is consistent with a recommendation last year by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine calling for a family caregiver strategy.

Our country relies on the contributions that unpaid family caregivers make and we must recognize and support them. By supporting family caregivers, we can ensure people live at home where they want to be—helping to delay or prevent more costly care, unnecessary hospitalizations, and institutional care—saving taxpayer dollars. We applaud the bipartisan leadership supporting this legislation and are committed to working with Members of Congress to enact the RAISE Family Caregivers Act this year.