



The Honorable Susan Collins  
United States Senate  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senate  
709 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Langevin  
United States House of Representatives  
2077 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gregg Harper  
United States House of Representatives  
2227 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 22, 2017

Dear Senator Collins, Senator Baldwin, Representative Langevin, and Representative Harper:

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM), including our nationwide networks of advocates, thank you for your continued leadership on issues and legislation important to Americans with Alzheimer's and other dementias, and to their caregivers. The Alzheimer's Association and AIM are pleased to support the bipartisan Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act (S. 1188/H.R. 2535) which would reauthorize the Lifespan Respite Care Program at \$15 million a year for five years.

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's and, without significant action as many as 16 million Americans will have Alzheimer's by 2050. Today, another person develops the disease every 66 seconds; by 2050, someone in the United States will develop the disease every 33 seconds. This explosive growth will cause Alzheimer's costs to increase from an estimated \$259 billion in 2017 to \$1.1 trillion in 2050 (in 2017 dollars). These mounting costs threaten to bankrupt families, businesses and our health care system.

Respite is planned, temporary relief for the caregiver through the provision of substitute care and is important to persons living with dementia. It can give a person with dementia an opportunity to interact with others having similar experiences in a safe, supportive environment designed for specific abilities and needs. Respite is also essential to caregivers of persons with dementia. In 2016, caregivers of people with Alzheimer's or other dementias provided an estimated 18.2 billion hours of unpaid assistance, a contribution to the nation valued at \$230.1 billion.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the financial sacrifices they make, twice as many of these caregivers report substantial emotional, financial, and physical difficulties compared to caregivers of people without dementia.<sup>2</sup> For example, approximately 30 percent to 40 percent of family caregivers of people with dementia suffer from depression, compared with 5 percent to 17 percent of non-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

caregivers of similar ages.<sup>3</sup> Respite allows caregivers time to take care of errands, spend time with family and friends, and attend to their own well-being.

The Lifespan Respite Care Program was enacted in 2006 with strong bipartisan support. The program provides competitive grants to states to establish or enhance statewide Lifespan Respite systems that maximize existing resources and help ensure that quality respite is available to all family caregivers. We encourage Congress to reauthorize the Program and ensure continued access to these important services.

The Alzheimer's Association and AIM appreciate your leadership on this important issue. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Conant, Senior Director of Federal Affairs, at [rconant@alz-aim.org](mailto:rconant@alz-aim.org) or at 202-638-7121.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Egge', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Egge  
Chief Public Policy Officer  
Executive Vice President, Government Affairs  
Alzheimer's Association

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.