

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

February 23, 2010

*Assist Families Caring for Loved Ones  
With Disabilities and Chronic Conditions*

**Support Respite Care Programs in FY11**

*\*\*This is a programmatic request and does not  
require a Member disclosure form\*\**

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of our nation's family caregivers, we urge you to join us in sending the attached letter to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies requesting the fully authorized amount of **\$94.81 million in funding for the Lifespan Respite Care Act programs in FY 2011**. As this program's authorization is slated to expire in FY 2011, it is more important than ever that the program receive robust funding to ensure its continuing success. The President has made support for family caregiving, including increased funding for Lifespan Respite, a central component of his Middle Class Initiative.

In 2007, the economic value of uncompensated family caregiving to the U.S. economy was estimated at \$375 billion. This amount is more than total Medicaid spending in 2007, including both federal and state contributions for both medical and long-term care (\$311 billion).

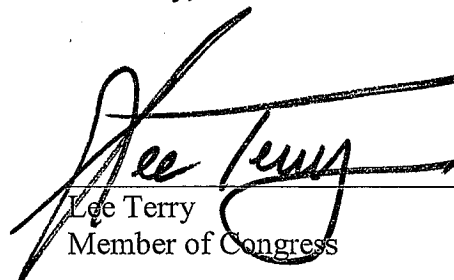
**Respite care, which provides temporary relief from continuous caregiving, decreases the need for professional long-term care, resulting in significant savings for the health care system and taxpayers.** Access to respite services has also been shown to improve caregiver health and well-being, promote family stability, avoid or delay more costly out-of-home placements and reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect. And since the Lifespan Respite program requires states to recruit and train respite care workers, it can help create more jobs.

We encourage you to join us in supporting over 50 million family caregivers by signing onto the attached letter. For more information or to sign on to this letter, please contact Todd Adams (Langevin) at 5-2735, or Tessie Abraham (Terry) at 5-4155.

Sincerely,



Jim Langevin  
Member of Congress



Lee Terry  
Member of Congress

March XX, 2010

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health & Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2358 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health & Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt,

As you prepare the FY2011 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill, we ask that the House include the fully authorized level of \$94.81 million for *Lifespan Respite Care Act* (PL 109-442) programs.

Respite care, the most frequently requested family support service, provides temporary relief from continuous caregiving of family members with disabilities or chronic conditions. It has been shown to provide family caregivers with the relief necessary to maintain their own health, balance work and family, bolster family stability, keep marriages intact, and avoid or delay more costly nursing home or foster care placements.

Following its widely supported enactment in 2006, *Lifespan Respite Care* was first funded at \$2.5 million in Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010. The President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget submission included \$5 million for Lifespan Respite Care, the first enhancement of funding since the program's enactment. We are very appreciative and encouraged by the President's recommendation given today's challenging budgetary climate. However, his recommendations focused on the needs of family caregivers of the aging population. The fact is that more than half (56%) of the nation's care recipients with a disabling or chronic condition are under age 75 and 28% are under age 50. Even with the proposed increase in Lifespan Respite, the funding remains inadequate to meet the needs in our communities.

As the only federal program to address respite accessibility and affordability issues for families regardless of age or disability, it serves a critical and unique purpose. The nation's estimated 50 million family caregivers provide about 80% of long-term care in the United States. A recent AARP study estimates the economic value of uncompensated family caregiving at \$375 billion -- more than total Medicaid spending, including both federal and state contributions for both medical and long-term care in 2007. Moreover, in these times of serious budget constraints, respite provides a valuable tool to aid in economic recovery and even create more jobs as respite providers are recruited and trained.

For families and individuals who may not qualify for any public or private respite funding, including children with severe disabilities, teens with serious emotional and psychological conditions, and adults with Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injuries, cancer, Alzheimer's and many other chronic physical and mental health conditions, these programs may be holding out the only helping hand. For our wounded veterans returning home from war with traumatic brain injuries and other polytraumas, Lifespan Respite systems could be the lifeline their families must turn to in their new roles as life-long family caregivers.

The Lifespan Respite Care Act is the only federal program that stands ready to meet these needs with funds for respite start-up, training, and coordination. We urge you to include full funding for the program at \$94.81 million in its last year of authorization. We look forward to working with you on cost-effective and proven ways to support the nation's family caregivers, who are the backbone of our long-term care system.

Sincerely,