

*As we head into the 114th United States Congressional session, we continue to monitor legislation that impacts family caregivers. Of note, the 2014 elections gave the Republicans control of the Senate (and control of both houses **of Congress**) for the first time 2005.*

White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA)

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act, as well as the 80th anniversary of Social Security. In the past, conference processes were determined by statute and directed by Congress through legislation authorizing the Older Americans Act. No funding has been appropriated to date. For this reason, the scale and scope of the Conference will differ from previous Conferences. The 2015 WHCOA will address four themes, including: retirement security, healthy aging, long-term services and supports, and elder justice. Additionally, a series of Regional Forums have been planned, which will culminate in a national conference tentatively scheduled for July. The Executive Director Nora Super is holding listening sessions with stakeholder groups across the country as well. The conference website features a regular blog that provides information and resources on topics of interest to older Americans, their families, caregivers, and others. **For updates and more info, please visit www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov.**

Older Americans Act Reauthorization – Senate Consideration

The Older Americans Act (OAA) funds critical services for the older adults and their caregivers, including meals, job training, senior centers, caregiver support, transportation, health promotion, benefits enrollment and more. Title III-E of the OAA, known as the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) provides information and assistance to family caregivers, counseling and support, caregiver training and education, respite care and other supplemental services. Chairman Alexander (R-TN) enlisted the support of Ranking Member Murray (D-WA) and Sens. Burr (R-NC) and Sanders (I-VT) for the Older Americans Act Reauthorization of 2015, which builds upon bipartisan legislation that the committee adopted in 2013.

S. 192 will:

- Create new support for modernizing multipurpose senior centers;
- Highlight the importance of addressing economic needs;
- Require that health promotion and disease prevention initiatives be evidence-based; and
- Promote chronic disease self-management and falls prevention.

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, the National Council on Aging, and the National Alliance for Caregiving (among others) support the bill. The bill's reauthorization would expire in three years, requiring a new bill.

Family And Medical Insurance Leave (“FAMILY”) Act

Sponsored by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D – Conn.) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D – N.Y.), the Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act would ensure people have some income during family or medical leave. The FAMILY Act would: provide workers with up to 12 weeks of partial income when they take time for their own serious health condition, including pregnancy and childbirth recovery, the serious health condition of a child, parent, spouse or domestic partner, the birth or adoption of a child, and/or for particular military caregiving and leave purposes. It would also enable workers to earn 66 percent of their monthly wages, up to a capped amount and cover workers in all companies, no matter their size. Younger, part-time, lower-wage and contingent workers would be eligible for benefits. The act is funded by small employee and employer payroll contributions of two-tenths of one percent each (two cents per \$10 in wages), or about \$1.50 per week for a typical worker. A new Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave within the Social Security Administration would administer the program. The National Alliance for Caregiving supports this bill. **Learn more about it and a corresponding sick leave act (the “Healthy Families” Act) at <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/>.**

Learn more about these initiatives and more at www.caregiving.org

In-Home Care Act of 2014

The In-Home Caregiver Assessment Resources and Education Act, or the In-Home CARE Act, introduced by Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) in 2014, would have amended the Public Health Service Act to require the Administration for Community Living to award grants to carry out home visiting programs for unpaid caregivers. The bill focused on: caregiver education and training regarding medication management, food preparation, falls prevention and other subjects; services or referrals for services related to home care, such as transportation, home modification, or respite care; and an assessment and referral for physical and mental health services for the caregiver or person receiving care from the caregiver. The Alliance supported this bill and hopes it will be reintroduced in 2015.

National Care Corps Act of 2014

U.S. Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM-1) proposed a national Care Corps program, modeled after the Peace Corps, that is designed to provide support for family caregivers and help meet the growing demand for the care of aging and disabled Americans. Rep. Lujan Grisham's National Care Corps Act (H.R. 5288) will place volunteers in communities to work with seniors and individuals with disabilities who need extra support to live independently. The Alliance supported this bill and hopes it will be reintroduced in 2015.

Caregiver Corps Act of 2014

Similar to Rep. Grisham's bill and introduced by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), the Caregiver Corps Act of 2014 amends the Public Health Service Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to contract with a nonprofit to develop an online toolkit and guidance providing for the establishment and implementation of Caregiver Corps volunteer programs in which volunteers provide assistance to individuals who are in need of assistance to remain in the community and are either aged 65 or older, or eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance. It would allow volunteers to provide assistance by giving an informal caregiver respite from caregiving duties, serving as a companion, or providing other assistance for which the volunteer is qualified. The Alliance supported this bill and hopes to see this reintroduced in 2015.

Social Security Caregiver Credit Act of 2014

Introduced Rep. Nita Lowey (D – NY -17) , the Social Security Caregiver Credit Act of 2014 would amend title II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) (OASDI) of the Social Security Act to modify the monthly social security benefit, including lump-sum death payments, to allow credit for family caregivers. The bill would credit individuals with having earned wages during the period of time when they were engaged for at least 80 hours of care to a dependent relative without monetary compensation for up to five years of such service. It does not apply where the benefit would be larger without it being used. The Alliance supported this bill and hopes to see this reintroduced in 2015.

The Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act – Model State Legislation

The CARE Act is model state-level legislation created by AARP for action at the state level. Often legislation like the CARE Act is created nationally and then is circulated across states. Once a state adopts it, typically surrounding states will take it up as well. The CARE Act has three components: 1) it requires a recording of a family caregiver's name at admission to a hospital or rehabilitation facility; 2) notifies the family caregiver if a loved one is going to be discharged to another facility or home; and (3) requires a facility to provide an explanation (and instruction) of the medical tasks a patient requires that the family caregiver will likely perform at home, like medication management, injections, wound care, and transfers. States that have recently passed the CARE Act in 2015 include: New Jersey, Oklahoma, Virginia. Bills are currently under consideration in Maryland and Hawaii. The Alliance supports this model legislation.

Lifespan Respite Care program in the FY2016 Appropriations Bill

The Lifespan Respite Care Program (LRCP) provides competitive grants to state agencies working in concert with Aging and Disability Resource Centers and non-profit state respite coalitions or organizations to make quality respite available and accessible to family caregivers regardless of age or disability through the establishment of State Lifespan Respite Systems. The nation's 65 million family caregivers provide 80% of long-term care, yet 89% do not receive any respite services. The Alliance strongly supports the President's budget request of \$5 million for the Lifespan Respite Care Program in fiscal year (FY) 2016.