



National Alliance for Caregiving

Advancing Family Caregiving through Research, Innovation & Advocacy

The National Alliance for Caregiving Supports the Credit for Caring Act of 2017

On behalf of the National Alliance for Caregiving—a non-profit coalition of national organizations focusing on advancing family caregiving through research, innovation, and advocacy—we are writing in support of the bipartisan Credit for Caring Act (S. 1151/H.R. 2505) of 2017. An estimated eighty percent of family caregivers pay out-of-pocket to provide care for their loved ones, spending an average of nearly \$7,000 annually in costs related to caregiving expenses. The Credit for Caring Act would give eligible family caregivers the opportunity to receive a tax credit for 30 percent of the qualified expenses above \$2,000 paid to help a loved one, up to a maximum credit amount of \$3,000. The Credit for Caring Act is an innovative solution to support families across the lifespan.

Over 43 million family caregivers provide much of our nation's long-term services and supports (LTSS), permitting individuals of all ages to remain in their homes and communities, avoiding or delaying more costly nursing home or foster care placements. Financial constraints, work and family demands, and the challenges of providing care place great pressure on family caregivers. The National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP study *Caregiving in the U.S. 2015* found that most family caregivers have been in their role for at least four years, and that family caregivers who provide the most amount of care are twice as likely to have been in their caregiving role for 10 or more years. About one in five family caregivers report experiencing financial strain as a result of providing care. Groups more likely to feel financial strain include “high-burden” caregivers, caregivers of someone with a mental health condition, and primary caregivers.

According to *Caregiving in the U.S.*, thirty-six percent of working family caregivers prefer a tax credit when asked which financial policy would be most helpful. Higher-hour caregivers (defined as caregivers who are spending 21 hours or more per week in the caregiver role) report difficulty in finding affordable caregiving services, such as delivered meals, transportation, or in-home health services, in the community for them and their loved ones. Caregivers who live more than an hour away from their care recipient also report higher levels of financial strain, perhaps because 4 out of 10 long-distance caregivers report the use of paid help. Better support for family caregivers is critical because often it is their availability that determines whether a person with an illness or disability can remain in his or her home.

We applaud Senators Joni Ernst, Michael Bennet, Shelley Moore Capito, Elizabeth Warren, and Representatives Tom Reed and Linda Sánchez for introducing The Credit for Caring Act of 2017, and enthusiastically support this pioneering approach to address the financial challenges of family caregivers and their families. The National Alliance for Caregiving will continue to promote this legislation and we offer our expertise and assistance in its implementation.