



National Alliance for Caregiving

Advancing Family Caregiving through Research, Innovation & Advocacy

The National Alliance for Caregiving Supports the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) 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 Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (S. 337/H.R. 947) of 2017.

We support this legislation to create a comprehensive national program that helps meet the needs of family caregivers and people with serious personal or family health issues through a shared fund that makes paid leave affordable for employers of all sizes and for workers and their families. This legislation, which encourages and empowers family caregivers to remain in the workforce, would contribute to the financial stability of families facing the challenges of a serious health condition of a child, parent, spouse or domestic partner and 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, and avoid or delay 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.* found that most caregivers have been in their role for at least four years, and that caregivers who provide the most amount of care are twice as likely to have been in their caregiving role for 10 or more years.

As of 2015, sixty percent of caregivers were employed at some point in the past year while also caregiving. Six out of every ten caregivers report having experienced at least one impact or change to their employment situation as a result of caregiving, such as cutting back on their working hours, taking a leave of absence, receiving a warning about performance or attendance, or other such impacts. 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. The economic cost of replacing unpaid caregiving is estimated to be \$470 billion.

The FAMILY Act would provide workers with up to 12 weeks of partial income when they take time to serve in their role as the caregiver. The legislation would help keep more family caregivers – and people with their own health conditions – employed and strengthen their financial positions over time. Because of this, we applaud Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Representative Rosa DeLauro for introducing The FAMILY Act of 2017, and enthusiastically support this pioneering approach to address the financial challenges of working 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.