

April 20, 2015

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte
United States Senate
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Diane Black
United States House of Representatives
1131 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham
United States House of Representatives
214 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Ayotte, Senator Bennet, Representative Black, and Representative Lujan Grisham:

We thank you for and appreciate your leadership in establishing and co-chairing the bipartisan, bicameral Assisting Caregivers Today (ACT) Caucus. Family caregivers are the backbone of services and supports in this country – the first line of assistance for older adults and persons with disabilities who want to live independently in their homes and communities. **The contribution family caregivers make to our society has been valued at \$450 billion annually in unpaid care**, and we continually rely on these individuals to fill in the gaps in our long-term care and health care systems. Family caregivers need support as they face many emotional, physical, and financial challenges.

In fact, 42 million family caregivers provide unpaid care to adults at any given point in time, and about 3.9 million family caregivers provide care to a child under age 18 because of a medical, behavioral, or other condition or disability. The average family caregiver is a 49-year-old female taking care of her mother for nearly 20 hours a week, but family caregivers are incredibly diverse. Over seven in ten caregivers were employed at some time when they were caregiving. Most people have been, are, or will be a family caregiver or are likely to need the help of one to live independently. Now, more than ever, we need solutions for family caregivers. This is truly an ageless and nonpartisan issue.

We are pleased the ACT Caucus will bring greater visibility to the value of and need to support family caregivers, as well as the challenges and opportunities individuals of all ages face as they seek to live independently. We appreciate that the caucus aims to inform Members of the House and Senate about these issues, elevate the conversation, forge an environment and context conducive to reaching bipartisan solutions, and help create a sense of urgency to act. As a diverse group of stakeholders, we come together in support of the ACT Caucus, and encourage other policymakers, thought leaders, and Members of the House and Senate to support this caucus, as well. We look forward to

collaborating with the ACT Caucus to raise awareness of family caregiving issues and work toward solutions.

Sincerely,

AARP

ACCSES

Alliance for Aging Research

Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County, TX

Alzheimer's Association

Alzheimer's Coalition of Henderson County, TX

Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA)

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association on Health and Disability

American Benefits Council

American Council of Life Insurers

American Dance Therapy Association

American Health Care Association

American Heart Association/American Stroke Association

American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Psychological Association

American Society on Aging

America's Health Insurance Plans

Assisted Living Federation of America

Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

Autism Speaks

Caregiver Action Network

Center for Excellence in Assisted Living (CEAL)

Easter Seals

Eldercare Workforce Alliance

Family Caregiver Alliance

Genworth Financial

John Hancock Life Insurance Company

Lakeshore Foundation

LeadingAge

LifeSecure Insurance Company

Long Term Care Partners

Lupus Foundation of America

Lutheran Services in America

Mutual of Omaha

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for Assisted Living
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
National Council on Aging
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Respite Coalition
New York Life Insurance Company
Oral Health America
Paralyzed Veterans of America
PHI (Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute)
Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving
SAGE (Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders)
Seniorlink/Caregiver Homes
The ALS Association
The Arc
The Center for Elder Care and Advanced Illness, Altarum Institute
The National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
The Elizabeth Dole Foundation
The Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER)
Transamerica Companies
United Spinal Association
Well Spouse Association