

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Bipartisan bill to support the health and wellbeing of family caregivers to be signed into law

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Following unanimous passage by the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, Senator Tammy Baldwin's bipartisan *Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act* heads to the President's desk to be signed into law. Authored by Senators Baldwin and Susan Collins (R-ME), as well as by Representatives Jim Langevin (D-RI) and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), this bipartisan legislation will support the health and wellbeing of family caregivers by authorizing \$10 million annually for the Lifespan Respite Care program from fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year 2024.

"Every day, family caregivers in Wisconsin and across our country tend to the needs of their loved ones," **said Senator Baldwin.** "Although this work can be very rewarding, it can also be emotionally and physically challenging. I'm proud to see my bipartisan legislation with Senator Collins win approval from both chambers of Congress. Together, we're going to help ensure continued funding for the Lifespan Respite Care Program so that our family caregivers can access the support and relief they need. I'm looking forward to the President signing this important bill into law."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the struggles of family caregivers and exacerbated the caregiver workforce crisis. Now more than ever, we need funding to cover costs to mitigate barriers to providing and accepting respite care, such as access and provision of PPE and the need for technological supports. Senator Baldwin really gets it, and we are grateful for her leadership and support of the

Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act,” **said Lisa Schneider, Executive Director of Respite Care Wisconsin.**

“Family and other unpaid caregivers play a critical and rarely recognized role in how our country cares for older adults,” **said John Sauer, President/CEO of LeadingAge Wisconsin.** “This legislation acknowledges their work and provides for essential respite services. During the pandemic, the burden on caregivers has grown, increasing their need for relief. Wisconsin’s aging services providers stand ready to help.”

“On behalf of family caregivers across the country, AARP thanks Senators Collins and Baldwin for their bipartisan work to extend the Lifespan Respite Care Program. Especially now in the middle of this pandemic, caregivers need respite services more than ever. We are thankful that this can help more families be able to take advantage of this much-needed relief,” **said Bill Sweeney, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs for AARP.**

“The National Respite Coalition applauds Representative Jim Langevin, Senator Susan Collins, Senator Tammy Baldwin, and Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers for championing the Lifespan Respite Reauthorization Act to final passage. The pandemic has exacerbated the social isolation and economic insecurity felt by family caregivers and their loved ones, with devastating effects on their health and wellness. Respite may be their only lifeline,” **said Jill Kagan, Director of the ARCH National Respite Network.** “The Lifespan Respite Care Program, through very modest investments, allows states the flexibility and creativity to make sure family caregivers of children and adults are receiving quality respite services, even during COVID-19. The NRC stands ready to work with its partners and with our Congressional champions to make sure the program is fully funded and implemented.”

Respite care provides temporary relief to caregivers from their ongoing responsibilities. By protecting the health of caregivers, respite care decreases the need for professional long-term care and allows individuals who require care to remain at home. To date, 41 states have received funding through the Lifespan Respite Care program. The program provides competitive grants to states to establish or enhance statewide respite resources and help ensure that quality respite is available and accessible to all family caregivers.

The Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act of 2019 is endorsed by 100 leading

caregiver and respite organizations, including AARP, the ARCH National Respite Coalition, Autism Society of America, the Arc, and the National Alliance for Caregiving. A group of 100 national, state, and local organizations across the country [have submitted a letter of support](#).

There are 53 million family caregivers in the United States that provide an estimated \$470 billion in uncompensated care each year.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).