



July 10, 2012

The Honorable Jim Langevin  
U. S. House of Representatives  
109 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2421 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Langevin and McMorris Rodgers:

AARP is pleased to endorse your bipartisan legislation, the Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3266), which would reauthorize the important Lifespan Respite Care Act that helps support family caregivers who need respite care.

The estimated economic value of family caregivers' unpaid contributions was about \$450 billion in 2009. Family members often undertake caregiving willingly, and many find it a source of deep satisfaction and meaning. However, family care can have negative effects on the caregivers' own financial situation, retirement security, physical and emotional health, social networks, careers, and the ability to keep their loved ones at home. Respite care provides an important temporary relief for family caregivers. Yet, 90% of family caregivers caring for someone over the age of 18 are unable to access or use respite services.

Family caregivers commonly experience emotional strain and mental health problems, especially depression. Research shows that caregivers have poorer physical health than noncaregivers. Family caregivers may also experience social isolation, as they often do not have free time for themselves or to be with others. In addition, nearly seven in ten (69 percent) caregivers report making work accommodations due to caregiving. Respite care can allow a family caregiver much needed time to go see their own doctor, run errands, go to work, and take care of themselves (ultimately helping them to better care for their loved one). The Lifespan Respite Care Act helps family caregivers caring for loved ones regardless of age or disability, including by training respite care workers and volunteers, providing information about and assistance in accessing services, better coordinating services, and providing respite services. Respite care can extend the time an individual is cared for within his or her home, potentially delaying costly institutional care and saving taxpayer dollars.

We thank you for your bipartisan leadership and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues on both sides of the aisle to enact the Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act. If you have any further questions, please feel free to call me or have your staff contact Rhonda Richards of our Government Affairs staff at 202-434-3770.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce A. Rogers".

Joyce A. Rogers  
Senior Vice President  
Government Affairs