

Friends of Respite,

As you know, the original FY08 funding bill agreed to by both the House and Senate in November included \$2 million for Lifespan Respite. This bill was vetoed by the President and the House failed to override the veto.

A new attempt was made to draft a bill the President would agree to sign and it came up for a vote this week. I am sorry to report, that despite our best efforts, funding for Lifespan Respite was not included in this final FY 08 Omnibus appropriations bill. The bill passed the House on Monday and the Senate late Tuesday night. There were no opportunities for amendments -- again despite our best efforts. The results are devastating for health, social service and education programs that have lost funding over the last six years. Most new programs lost funding and all programs sustained cuts of at least 1.74% across the board -- many suffered greater cuts -- in order to meet the President's budget request and avoid another veto. After going back to the House for a final vote, the President is expected to sign this bill as the Senate added funding for the war in Iraq as well.

We already have commitments from our legislative champions to sit down in January and begin the effort to secure funding for FY09. However, it is critical that we very quickly identify legislative champions on the House and Senate appropriations committees who will ensure Lifespan Respite funding for next year. I have included the list of House and Senate Appropriations Committee members by state so that you can take the holiday recess (beginning the end of this week and lasting most of January) to reach out and educate your federal legislators who serve on the appropriations committees about the respite needs of the nation's caregivers.

Look for a new alert and talking points before the end of the year.

It has been a privilege and honor to work with all of you on enactment and funding of the Lifespan respite legislation. We sustained a major victory with passage of the Act, which assures a respite policy through FY 2011, but we must and will get funding next year as we continue our work together.

Please have a very peaceful and healthy New Year and a joyous holiday season.

Best Wishes for a fabulous 2008!! Jill

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www.archrespite.org/nrc.htm

ARCH National Respite Locator at www.respitelocator.org