



**URGENT APPROPRIATIONS ALERT**  
**Lifespan Respite Care Act (P.L. 109-442)**  
**February 2008**

***Do you want to see funding for Lifespan Respite in FY2009? If the answer is yes, then you must ask take action and contact your federal Representatives today!***

**STATUS:** The Lifespan Respite Care Act was signed into law in 2006, but has not received any funding from Congress. We can change that by urging Congress to include funding for the program in the FY09 Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bills that will soon be drafted by both the House and Senate. The law authorizes Congress to spend up to \$53.3 million in FY09 and we are requesting the full authorized amount. Even if you have been urging funding for months, the process starts anew in 2008. Keep up the contacts, emails, phone calls, and especially the face-to-face visits with your Representatives and Senators.

**ACTION:** In the US House of Representatives, Congressmen Langevin (D-RI) and Ferguson (R-NJ) have sent a "Dear Colleague" to all Members of the House urging them to sign onto a letter that will go to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education appropriations to fund Lifespan Respite in 2009. **Please call or visit your Representative today and urge them to sign onto this letter (see attached).**

To identify your federal legislators, visit [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org) and type in your zip code. You can cut and paste the message below and send an email at this site. If you prefer to reach your legislators by phone, call 202-224-3121 and ask for the Member's office; then ask for appropriations staff and offer the following message:

**MESSAGE:**

- ***The Lifespan Respite Care Act was passed by Congress in 2006 to make respite more accessible and affordable to family caregivers, regardless of age or disability, but to date, Congress has provided no funding (\$0.00).***
- In our state of \_\_\_\_\_, family caregivers need respite desperately, regardless of the age or disability of the care recipient. [Supplement with personal stories, state data on respite need, including waiting lists, costs, etc.]
- Representatives Langevin and Ferguson have circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter asking you to sign onto a letter to the House Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education urging full funding (\$53.3 million) for the Lifespan Respite Care program in the FY09 Labor, HHS, and Education funding bill.
- TAKE ACTION in support of family caregivers. On behalf of all the family caregivers in your state, please contact Congressman Langevin or Ferguson and sign onto this letter today.
- We finally have an opportunity to provide the one service -- respite -- family caregivers most frequently request and say they need to go on and at the same time provide significant savings to our long-term care system.
- If you need more information about the need for respite in your district or state, please feel free to contact me or \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. state respite coalition contact, state or community-based agency contact, or other organizational representative).

**Prepared by National Respite Coalition. For more information, please contact Jill Kagan at [jbkagan@verizon.net](mailto:jbkagan@verizon.net) or by phone at 703-256-9578 or visit [www.archrespite.org/nrc.htm](http://www.archrespite.org/nrc.htm).**

“Dear Colleague” from Reps. Langevin and Ferguson to House Members asking them to sign letter below:

**Support Families Caring for Loved Ones  
Fund Respite Care Programs in FY09**

February 21, 2008

**THIS LETTER IS CONSIDERED A PROGRAMMATIC REQUEST AND DOES NOT REQUIRE MEMBERS TO SUBMIT INDIVIDUAL DISCLOSURE FORMS**

Dear Colleague:

On behalf of our nation’s family caregivers, we urge you to join us in sending the attached letter to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services and Education requesting the fully authorized amount of **\$53.3 million in funding for the Lifespan Respite Care Act programs in fiscal year (FY) 2009.**

In 2005, approximately \$207 billion was spent on professional long-term care services; 49 percent paid for by Medicaid and 20 percent paid for by Medicare. However, voluntary family caregiving accounts for 80 percent of the overall long-term care provided in the United States, at a savings of more than \$300 billion annually.

**Respite care, which provides temporary relief from continuous caregiving, decreases the need for professional long-term care, resulting in significant savings for the health care system and taxpayers.** Access to respite services has also been shown to improve caregiver health and well-being, promote family stability, avoid or delay more costly out-of-home placements and reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect.

We encourage you to join us in supporting family caregivers by signing onto the attached letter. For more information or to sign on to this letter, please contact Todd Adams in Congressman Langevin’s office at 5-2735 or Todd.Adams@mail.house.gov or Derick Apt in Congressman Ferguson’s office at 5-5361 or Derick.Apt@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

/S JIM LANGEVIN  
Member of Congress

/S MIKE FERGUSON  
Member of Congress

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Ask Your House Representative to sign onto this letter:

March XX, 2008

The Honorable David R. Obey  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health & Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James T. Walsh  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee Labor,  
Health & Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

As your Subcommittee prepares to mark up the Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill, we ask that the House include the fully authorized level of funding, \$53.3 million, for the *Lifespan Respite Care Act* programs in FY 2009.

Chronic illnesses are the fastest-growing illnesses in our country today, and older adults are the fastest-growing population. Consequently, long-term care is increasingly important for our nation’s health and constitutes a significant portion of Medicaid and Medicare spending. In 2005, approximately \$207 billion was spent on professional long-term care services; 49 percent paid for by Medicaid and 20 percent paid for by Medicare. This is compared to the \$137 billion spent on professional long-term care in 2000.

However, a substantial amount of our nation’s long term care is voluntarily provided by family caregivers and is often unpaid. Family caregiving accounts for 80 percent of the overall long-term care provided in the United States, at a value of more than \$300 billion annually.

Respite care, which provides temporary relief from continuous caregiving, decreases the likelihood of formal long-term care, resulting in significant savings for the health care system and taxpayers. Access to respite services has also been shown to help improve caregiver health and well-being, promote family stability, avoid or delay more costly out-of-home placements and reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect.

In December 2006, Congress and the Administration sent a clear message of support to family caregivers with the enactment of the Lifespan Respite Care Act. Through competitive grants, the Lifespan Respite Care Act offers states the opportunity to expand access to respite care, improve local coordination of services and help families obtain information on respite provider options and payment plans.

Enactment of this legislation is the culmination of many years of bipartisan effort and will have a significant impact on our nation's caregivers. We look forward to working with you on ways to support the approximately 26 million family caregivers in the United States.

Sincerely,