



RCAW
Respite Care Association
of Wisconsin

April 2, 2019

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

We, Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW) and the undersigned Wisconsin organizations representing all ages and disabilities, are writing to offer our fervent support for and endorsement of the Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act to reauthorize the Lifespan Respite Care Program at \$200 million over five years. We also want to thank you for your leadership in supporting Wisconsin's family caregivers.

Respite—short-term care that offers individuals or family members temporary relief from the daily routine and stress of providing care—is a critical component to bolstering family stability and maintaining family caregiver health and well-being. Respite is a frequently requested support service among family caregivers, but 85% of family caregivers of adults receive no respite and the percentage is similar for parents caring for their children with disabilities. Not surprisingly, high burden family caregivers (defined as those who assist their loved one with personal care such as getting dressed or bathing) cite lack of respite as one of their top three concerns.

Though the program has been drastically underfunded since its inception, thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia – including Wisconsin, have received grants and are engaged in impressive work such as identifying and coordinating respite services available through various agencies, including helping unserved families pay for respite through caregiver respite grant programs, mini-grants to community and faith-based agencies; building respite capacity by recruiting and training respite workers; and raising awareness about respite through public outreach and education efforts – these are all programming activities currently provided by RCAW.

We thank you for your commitment to individuals living with disabilities, older individuals in need of assistance and support, and the loved ones who care for them and we look forward to continuing to work with you as the bill moves forward. If you would like more information, please contact Lisa Schneider at lschneider@respitcarewi.org.

Sincerely,

Lisa Schneider, Executive Director
Respite Care Association of Wisconsin

P.O. Box 702, Portage, WI 53901 • info@respitcarewi.org • phone: 608.222.2033 • fax: 608.222.2034

respitcarewi.org

“Please support the lifespan grant, as a provider of respite for both adults and children we see the relief it provides to the caregivers as well as the excitement of the person receiving respite. Thank You for your support!” **Marguerite Rupnow, National Director of Admissions and Advocacy, Prader-Willi Homes of Oconomowoc**

“WI-BPDD strongly supports the increase in Lifespan Respite Reauthorization. Families and caregivers desperately need support to continue to serve and support individuals with disabilities and aging adults.” **Fil Clissa, Program/Policy Analyst, WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities**

Tyler Engel, Project Manager, Whitmore Research at University of Wisconsin School of Nursing

“This is a crucial resource for agencies trying to support all those needing support in our communities.” **Tricia Lazare, Community Resources Manager, Inclusa**

“Respite care is vital to keeping families healthy - please support people with disabilities and their families!” **Emily Levine, Executive Director, Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin**

Kirsten Cooper, Executive Director, Autism Society of Wisconsin

Lisa Pugh, State Director, The Arc Wisconsin

“My mother was diagnosed with Dementia and continues to need additional support as time continues to pass. The Lifespan Respite has made a difference in our lives and is so important to our family.” **Susan Kunkel, Family Caregiver**
