



A Campaign for **Action** on the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers

POWERED BY THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR CAREGIVING

August 16, 2024

Senator Bernard Sanders, Chair
Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D., Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Submitted electronically

RE: Act on RAISE Endorsement of S. 4776 – Older Americans Act Reauthorization of 2024

Dear Chairman Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

On behalf of the Act on RAISE campaign, we appreciate the dedication of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee and Special Committee on Aging to advancing The Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 4776) through committee consideration. The Act on RAISE Campaign, which brings together stakeholders across the caregiving consortium to strengthen our nation's first-ever National Strategy to support America's 53 million family caregivers, supports S. 4776. This important bipartisan legislation represents the diligent work of Senate leaders, staff, and champions across the country to ensure that the OAA can continue to provide critical supports to millions of older adults and family caregivers in every community.

The OAA serves as a vital resource for nearly 11 million older adults and an estimated 800,000 caregivers annually.^{1,2} For nearly 60 years, the OAA has supported a nationwide network of state, regional, and community entities that enable older adults to age with dignity and independence in their homes and communities. OAA reauthorization is an important opportunity for Congressional leaders to strengthen supports for family caregivers in every community through the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP), and we look forward to

working with Senate champions and colleagues in the House to advance meaningful bipartisan OAA reauthorization this year.

The Act on RAISE Campaign's [Policy Brief](#) outlines many of the Campaign's standing priorities for OAA reauthorization, including calling on lawmakers to double authorized funding levels for all Older Americans Act Programs, with particular attention to those that support family caregivers. While we remain committed to addressing ongoing insufficient funding for the Older Americans Act, including for the Family Caregiver Support Program, **we appreciate Senate negotiators for including the modest 4.62 percent increase annually in authorized funding levels for all OAA programs in the bipartisan bill.**

Additionally, we appreciate that lawmakers incorporated the following important provisions in S. 4776. We remain committed to championing important proposals through full Senate and House consideration.

Reauthorization of the RAISE Family Caregivers Act and the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act

We strongly support and appreciate the five-year extensions for the RAISE Family Caregivers Act and for the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act. *This* reauthorization will ensure that the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers will continue to advance cross-cutting, national efforts to improve supports for family caregivers. First passed in 2018 and extended in the 2020 OAA reauthorization, these efforts have catalyzed comprehensive strategies to support the broad cross section of the country's fifty-three million caregivers. The RAISE Family Caregivers Act supported efforts to develop the milestone 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers, which reflects a whole-of-government approach to:

- Achieve greater awareness of and enhance outreach to family caregivers;
- Advance partnerships and engagement with family caregivers;
- Strengthen services and supports for family caregivers;
- Improve financial and workplace security for family caregivers; and
- Develop more data, research, and evidence-based practices to support family caregivers.

We applaud lawmakers for including these long-term extensions for both RAISE and SGRC through the OAA to align with the OAA future OAA reauthorizations. This

approach will ensure that the National Strategy is updated on a biennial basis to reflect changes in the caregiver landscape.

Improving the National Family Caregiver Support Program

We commend Senate policymakers for including provisions to expand and enhance data collection efforts about the needs of family caregivers and their care recipients to inform program improvements for a growing population, including efforts to advance adoption of caregiver assessments in OAA service delivery and technical assistance to promote adoption of caregiver assessments. We appreciate that S. 4776 adds trauma-informed services, peer supports, and elder abuse prevention as authorized support services for caregivers, and that the bill preserves authorization for Activities of National significance to advance the goals identified in the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers.

The State and area planning processes required under the Older Americans Act are essential activities to ensure coordination between local, state, and tribal programs and guide service delivery to individuals with greatest economic and social needs. We support language that requires state and area plans include service-area wide access to information about available supports for family caregivers and older relative caregivers. Additionally, we support the provision that requires the state plan to provide assurances about available technical assistance to sustain the capacity of the network to serve older individuals and caregivers.

Expanding Access to Evidence-Informed Programs

Evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention programming under Title III-D of the OAA support proven interventions promote health and manage chronic conditions for older adults. We appreciate the willingness of lawmakers to work with advocates and others to allow evidence-informed programs to be supported through Title III-D. With adequate funding, we expect that this change will improve access to proven, culturally relevant programs that can support caregiver health and well-being.

White House Conference on Aging

The White House has held a Conference on Aging every decade, beginning in 1961, to identify and advance actions to improve the quality of life of older Americans. We support authorization for a 2025 White House Conference on Aging to engage older adults, family caregivers, advocates, policymakers at all levels of government, and other critical stakeholders in identifying and advancing policy recommendations that

are important to older Americans, their families, and communities. We look forward to building on the success of the National Strategy to ensure that a 2025 White House Conference on Aging fully realizes its potential as a national spotlighted convening to advance supports for caregivers across the country.

Conclusion

Again, we sincerely appreciate your dedication to advancing a bipartisan bill that makes meaningful improvements to vital Older Americans Act. We are grateful for your diligence in working with advocates on behalf of the millions of older adults and family caregivers that benefit from critical OAA programs each year. We look forward to working with you to advance S. 4776 through the Senate, and to ensure family caregivers are valued and supported in their vital role as Older Americans Act reauthorization conversations progress in the House. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Michael Wittke at mike@caregiving.org.

Sincerely,

Act On RAISE Steering Committee and Campaign Partners

AARP*	East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
Alzheimer's Association/Alzheimer's Impact Movement*	Elizabeth Dole Foundation*
Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation	Essential Caregivers Coalition
American Association of Caregiving Youth	Family Caregiver Alliance
The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration	Family Caregiver Center of New Mexico
Caring Across Generations*	FamilyMeans
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation	Gerontological Society of America
Credit for Caring by REUNIONCare	Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.
Diverse Elders Coalition*	Gray Matters Older Adult Solutions
	Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition
	Justice in Aging*

Memory Matters

MTO Cares

NAMI Middlesex

National Alliance for Caregiving*

National Council on Aging*

National Health Council*

National Respite Coalition

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Rosalynn Carter Institute for
Caregivers*

The Arc*

USAging*

Women's Institute for a Secure
Retirement

**Act on RAISE Steering
Committee Member*