

# Paid Leave Alliance for Dementia Caregivers

Convened by **UsAgainstAlzheimer's**

July 28, 2020

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
2-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Congressional Action and Protecting Family Caregivers

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Paid Leave Alliance for Dementia Caregivers, and the more than 16 million family caregivers providing care for a loved one living with Alzheimer's or a related dementia, we are writing to urge you to include the emergency paid sick days and paid leave provisions contained in the House-passed HEROES Act in the Senate draft of the next coronavirus response package.

These provisions, nearly identical to the emergency provisions outlined in the PAID Leave Act (S. 3513), would close the loopholes left by the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*. While we appreciate Congress's leadership and bipartisan support in creating the first-ever national paid sick days and paid family leave protections, the intentional or inadvertent exclusion of family caregivers is troubling.

Furthermore, under the *Families First Act*, eligible workers have access to ten days of paid sick leave if they are ill with COVID-19 or need to care for an ill family member but are excluded from accessing the 12 weeks of longer-term leave for these purposes. As we have learned more about COVID-19, we know that all working people need access to paid sick days and paid leave, and that ten days is insufficient for recovery in many cases.

Congress needs to support caregivers of loved ones living with chronic conditions and expand paid leave benefits to cover those who need it, including:

- People who are caring for loved ones with a serious medical condition like Alzheimer's disease and related dementias who have not been quarantined or show symptoms of COVID-19.
- People whose loved one's caregiving arrangements and adult day care centers are no longer in operation due to caregiver illness (including home health aides) or closures due to COVID-19 and related quarantine recommendations or requirements.
- People who work at a company with more than 500 employees; those large companies are exempted from the paid family leave requirement.

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In fact, a new survey of the dementia community conducted by UsAgainstAlzheimer's found the stress and pressures growing on caregivers:

- 82% percent of caregivers say their stress is higher now because of the coronavirus.
- 74% of caregivers are more concerned about their financial health and their family's finances than before the coronavirus.
- 32% of caregivers want additional government support for their caregiving.

We know that paid leave is an effective tool for supporting unpaid family caregivers during times of crisis. According to UsA2 research, one-half of employed dementia caregivers reported that utilization of paid leave benefits improved their ability to provide quality care to a loved one and emotional well-being. It's clear that paid leave can help alleviate the hardship of dementia care on working family caregivers. Leaving this community behind negatively impacts the financial security and well-being of millions of American families.

The provisions contained in the HEROES Act will protect not just workers and families, but coworkers, customers, and consumers. It will make workplaces and public spaces safer as we reopen. Paid leave is also a proven tool to reducing transmission of COVID-19, and the top relief policy voters consistently ask for. We hope that as you negotiate a Senate draft of the next coronavirus response package, you will keep in mind the health and caregiving needs of America's working people and include the emergency paid sick days and paid leave provisions passed by the House in the HEROES Act.

Sincerely,

Alzheimer's Los Angeles

Alzheimer's Mississippi

Alzheimer's New Jersey

Alzheimer's Orange County

American Geriatrics Society

American Medical Women's Association

HFC (formerly Hilarity for Charity)

Global Alzheimer's Platform Foundation

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Latinos For A Secure Retirement

Lewy Body Dementia Association

Milken Institute

National Alliance for Caregiving

The Gerontological Society of America

The Balm In Gilead Inc.

Mississippi Family Caregiver Coalition

The Youth Movement Against Alzheimer's

UsAgainstAlzheimer's

Cc: Members of the United States Senate