



National Alliance for Caregiving

A National Resource on Caregiving

4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 205

Bethesda, MD 20814

February 24, 2010

Vice President Biden
The White House,
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

The National Alliance for Caregiving is proud to support the Middle Class Task Force and their efforts to support family caregivers. Family caregivers are the backbone of our country's long-term care system-- 65.7 million of them are providing care to relatives, friends, and neighbors, for an average of 18 hours per week. While family caregivers are happy to care for their loved ones, caregiving can take an emotional, physical and financial toll.

Your Task Force's proposed addition of funds to the National Family Caregiver Support Program is a welcome addition to the Federal Government's only program that focuses specifically on family caregivers. These funds will mean more respite care, support groups, information and referral, and other services for Middle Class caregivers, as well as funds for transportation, adult day care, and services that benefit caregivers by helping the older adult they are caring for. As the demographics of our country shift toward a population living longer but with more women in the workplace and fewer children of Baby Boomers, support to family caregivers becomes even more critical.

And, as a secondary benefit, we see the Middle Class Task Force initiative bringing much needed public awareness to the issue of family caregiving as a whole.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Gail Gibson Hunt
President and CEO
National Alliance for Caregiving
4720 Montgomery Lane, 5th Floor
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-718-8444
301-652-7711 (fax)
www.caregiving.org

A Coalition of National Organizations and Corporations

Phone: 301.718.8444 Fax: 301.951.9067

www.caregiving.org



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Ashley B. Carson



February 24, 2009

Vice President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. Vice President,

OWL applauds the work of the Middle Class Task Force, and is thrilled that you and your colleagues are focusing attention on the often overlooked issue of unpaid family caregiving.

Each year, 65 million Americans provide significant care to a loved one, amounting to \$375 billion worth of unpaid care per year. The vast majority of these caregivers are women, and those in the “sandwich generation” often find themselves caring not only for aging relatives, but also for their own children. Not only does this care take a financial toll in terms of lost income for women who must leave the workforce to provide care, but there is an emotional and physical cost as well. Increasing support to these individuals, who provide much needed service to our communities, is necessary to ensure strong families, and is an issue critical to the middle class.

The recommendation from the Task Force to provide an additional \$102.5 million through the Caregiving Initiative will support more respite care, counseling, training, referrals, and adult day care. Increased funding for the National Family Caregiver Support Program and Lifespan Respite Care, along with strengthening supportive services through Title III-B of the Older Americans Act, would provide for greater investment in community-based programs that support both older Americans and their caregivers. These programs help older American access needed services, while preserving self-determination and autonomy for those who wish to remain in their homes and communities.

The extra funding proposed by the Task Force will allow nearly 200,000 additional caregivers to be served and 3 million more hours of respite care to be provided. It adds funding to programs that provide transportation help, adult day care, and in-home services including aides to help bathe and cook. For those who are receiving care, these services are necessary, and for those providing care, they are small things that can make a big difference.

Again, thank you for your leadership on the Middle Class Task Force and for your attention to the needs of family caregivers. We look forward to working with Congress and the Administration to support implementation of these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Ashley B. Carson, J.D.
Executive Director, OWL



February 24, 2010

The Honorable Joe Biden
Vice President of the United States
Washington, DC

Dear Vice President Biden:

On behalf of the National Council on Aging (NCOA), I am writing to express our gratitude and support for the recommendation of the Middle Class Task Force to expand assistance for America's family caregivers.

In particular, we applaud the fact that the Caregiver Initiative invests in proven programs and an established network of organizations that is currently struggling to assist caregivers and older adults in communities across the nation. New funding for the National Family Caregiver Support Program, the Lifespan Respite Care Program and Older Americans Act Supportive Services will provide crucial resources and support to many more caregivers and enable additional seniors to maintain their independence so they can age in place in their own homes and communities.

An estimated 38 million Americans (23 million with jobs) provide unpaid care to an aging relative. *Caregiving in the U.S. 2009*, funded by the MetLife Foundation on behalf of the national Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, found that 29 percent of the U.S. adult population, or 65.7 million people, are caregivers, and are caring for adults, the elderly or children with special needs. These caregivers provide an average of 20 hours of care per week.

The challenges of family caregiving in an aging society are a reality of daily life for millions of baby boomers as they seek to or provide care for their parents, spouses, and other loved ones. These services are often key factors in allowing families to stay together and keep relatives out of nursing homes. Caregiving often imposes enormous physical, financial and emotional burdens on those providing care. The Administration's Caregiver Initiative will make important strides toward relieving these enormous burdens for middle class families throughout the nation.

NCOA is a national voice for older Americans, especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, and the community organizations that serve them. We look forward to working with the Administration to help make the Caregiver Initiative a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Firman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James P. Firman
President and CEO



ALZHEIMER'S FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

Our mission is "to provide optimal care and services to individuals confronting dementia, and to their caregivers and families—through member organizations dedicated to improving quality of life."

February 23, 2010

Vice President Joe Biden
Office of the Vice President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President Biden,

The White House's Middle Class Task Force recommendations mark a critical turning point for American families who have loved ones with Alzheimer's disease or other chronic diseases. Family caregivers who struggle each day with practical and financial challenges have been anxiously waiting for this issue to be brought to the national stage and for relief in their own homes and communities. These individuals, ranging from adolescents to the elderly, typically face significant life changes, including those that influence their financial health and their mental and physical health. For too long, their plight has not been given its just due and their role in the U.S. healthcare system has been undervalued.

There is no doubt that the gravity of the situation is enormous and the overall solution will require much greater price tags. But for countless families currently in the thick of overwhelming caregiving responsibilities, the task force's caregiver initiative can prove to be a lifeline. Any assistance at any level is welcome. Even just a few hours of time off or connections to community support services can impact caregiver well being and can mean the difference between keeping a loved one at home and having to turn to more costly nursing home care.

Moreover, these recommendations send a strong message of hope. The proposed initiative represents a welcome change in direction, from minimal or flat lined funding in the past to amounts that will impact hundreds of thousands of American families. Funding aside, these recommendations bear enormous value in shedding new light on family caregiving and set the stage for future attention, boding well for more gains in the near- and long-term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric J. Hall', written in a cursive style.

Eric J. Hall
President and Chief Executive Officer

322 Eighth Avenue, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10001
(866) AFA-8484 • Fax: (646) 638-1546
info@alzfdn.org • www.alzfdn.org



Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.

February 23, 2010

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Biden:

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), which represents the 629 Area Agencies on Aging and 244 Title VI Native American aging programs in the United States, applauds your Middle Class Task Force's recent recommendations to significantly invest in community-based programs that support the independence of older Americans and their caregivers.

By proposing increased funding for several Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and services as part of your Caregiving Initiative—specifically, the National Family Caregiver Support Program (Title III E), the corresponding caregiving programs for Native Americans (Title VI C), and the flexible pool of funding for Supportive Services (Title III B)—the Administration is recommending a significant and wise investment in the community-based programs that millions of older adults and caregivers depend on. Coordinated through Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Native American aging programs in Indian country, these OAA programs provide a wide range of services to struggling caregivers and vulnerable older adults.

The **National Family Caregiver Support Program** (NFCSP) offers a range of services to support family caregivers, including information about services; assistance in gaining access to services; individual counseling, organization of support groups, and caregiver training; respite care; and supplemental services as the limited funding allows. These services are much needed and in high demand in every community. The increased funding for NFCSP recommended in the President's FY 2011 budget will go a long way toward meeting these urgent needs. Ensuring a comparable increase in the **Title VI Native American caregiving program** is also an excellent investment, as elders and

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 1200, Washington, DC 20036 T. 202.872.0888 F. 202.872.0057 www.n4a.org

caregivers in Indian country are historically underserved yet program funds are extremely limited.

n4a also salutes your attention to the newer **Lifespan Respite** program, which aims to improve the provision of respite and other caregiver supports to caregivers of all ages, caring for loved ones across the lifespan. Our members look forward to working with the U.S. Administration on Aging as they begin to build this program.

We particularly thank you for understanding that without a range of home and community-based supports to complement and supplement the help an informal caregiver provides, an older adult may still be at risk of unnecessary institutionalization.

OAA's Title III B, Supportive Services, provides a truly flexible pool of funds so that local AAAs can deliver just what an individual older adult needs to remain independent. This can range from rides to medical appointments, in-home health aides, chore services, help selecting Medicare prescription drug plans, case management and dozens of other options. When older adults can access these supportive services, they are less likely to end up with more expensive and unnecessary institutional care, which often means spending down to Medicaid. It makes more fiscal and human sense to serve people where they are, where they want to stay and to save federal and state governments money while doing it. We are pleased that the Administration's FY 2011 budget recommendation also included increased investment in the comparable Title VI Native American program.

We applaud the work that has been done by the Administration thus far to strengthen long-term living options through home and community-based services, and we look forward to working with your Task Force, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Administration on Aging to continue to ensure that our nation's older adults and their caregivers receive the supports and services they need...and deserve. n4a will also be working with Congress to ensure that the Administration's recommendations are fully embraced and funded.

Again, thank you for supporting a system and services that truly make a difference in the lives of middle class—as well as all—Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandy Markwood".

Sandy Markwood
Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services
The Honorable Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary for Aging

February 23, 2010

The Honorable Joseph Biden
Vice President of the United States
The White House

Dear Vice President Biden:

I write today on behalf of the National Association of State Units on Aging, our members, and the seniors, family caregivers, and persons with disabilities they serve to thank you and the Middle Class Task Force for proposing the Caregiver Initiative.

NASUA represents the 56 officially designated state and territorial agencies on aging. In addition to administering the services funded by the Older Americans Act, many of our members also serve as the operating agency in their states for Medicaid home and community based services (HCBS) waivers that serve older adults, and in some cases, individuals with disabilities. We are keenly aware of the challenges facing many caregivers and strongly support efforts to bolster respite and other home and community-based supports.

This \$102.5 million Caregiver Initiative recently announced by the White House Task Force on Middle Class Families amounts to significant increases of \$50 million in additional funding for Older Americans Act Title IIIB supportive services; \$50 million for the National Family Caregiver Support Program; and \$2.5 million for the Lifespan Respite program. NASUA strongly supports this effort and urges Congress to act to enact the President's proposed funding increases for critical services for seniors, persons with disabilities and their caregivers, such as these.

Once again, thank you sincerely for your efforts on behalf of Middle Class Families and caregivers in particular.

Sincerely,



Martha Roherty
Executive Director

February 24, 2010

Vice President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

On behalf of the 150,000 professional social work members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), I write in support of the recommendations of the Middle Class Task Force in “Helping Families Balance Work and Caregiving Obligations.” These proposed policies support social workers’ suggestions and experience in working with families who care for their older relatives.

In recent years, NASW has conducted research, created online information for professional social workers and the public, and is developing standards in the area of social work practice with caregivers. In 2006 and 2008, NASW, in partnership with the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM), conducted research focusing particularly on sandwich generation women (SGW) who were between the ages of 35 and 54 and caring for their own children and aging relatives. In the 2006 study sandwich generation women were surveyed about their experience as caregivers. In the 2008 study social workers were surveyed about their experience working with sandwich generation women. Key findings from these surveys included:

- increasing feelings of depression and difficulty in managing stress
- being ill-prepared for the challenges of caring for older relatives, especially for the costs of care
- underestimating the financial, emotional and physical toll of providing care
- delaying asking for assistance, believing they can take on these additional responsibilities themselves

Social workers reported that they ease caregivers’ burdens by providing care management or care coordination, including making referrals to services, arranging transportation and food delivery, advising on financial management and benefits and acting as a liaison when the caregiver does not live in the same location as the older adult.

Expanding the Dependent Care Tax Credit, which has only been raised once in 28 years, assists in managing the costs of caregiving. The \$102.5 million Caregiver Initiative provides resources to address the most frequent needs of caregivers – respite care, transportation, and assistance with activities of daily living.

With the expected increase in the numbers of older adults, government's attention to sound public policy regarding caregiving is required. Thank you for your foresight and important initiatives in this area. NASW is pleased to partner with you to make these initiatives a reality.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth J. Clark

Elizabeth J. Clark, PhD, ACSW, MPH
Executive Director



NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS ASSOCIATION

February 22, 2010

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Vice President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Biden:

On behalf of the National Family Caregiver's Association (NFCA), I want to express our gratitude for your support in recommending additional funding for family caregiver programs. Recent research has shown that there are now 65.7 million family caregivers in America. NFCA is the nation's premier organization directly reaching out to all of our nation's family caregivers, regardless of their loved one's age or diagnosis. Your willingness to acknowledge the important role that family caregivers play in the delivery of care is a strong endorsement of the work family caregivers do, and we greatly appreciate it.

By empowering them through educational programming, advocacy, and peer support, while simultaneously working at the federal level to remove barriers to their health and well being, NFCA is making a difference in the quality of their lives and that of their loved ones every day.

There is an overwhelming body of research that shows the need for services to aid family caregivers, to help them become more confident and capable in their caregiving role, and to minimize the negative impacts caregiving can have on their health, finances, and emotional well being. That is why NFCA was extremely pleased to see the recommendation of the Vice President's Middle Class Task Force for \$102.5 million for the Administration on Aging's Caregiver Initiative to expand help to families and seniors so that caregivers can better manage their multiple responsibilities and seniors can live in the community for as long as possible. By adding to existing programs that have already proven their value, we can all be assured that the vast majority of the funding will go toward the provision of services and not administrative costs.

We are grateful to the Vice President for making family caregiving a key part of his report and look forward to working with you to improve the lives of America's family caregivers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Suzanne Mintz'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Suzanne Mintz
President and CEO



601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049

T 202-434-2277
1-888-OUR-AARP
1-888-687-2277
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org

February 26, 2010

Vice President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Biden:

AARP appreciates the work of the Middle Class Task Force on retirement security and family caregiving issues. These are important issues to AARP members and their families that affect their health and financial security and well-being. Many individuals and their families have seen their retirement savings decline and family budgets dwindle. Many families are caring for their loved ones, including individuals in the “sandwich generation,” who are caring for their older parents and their children simultaneously.

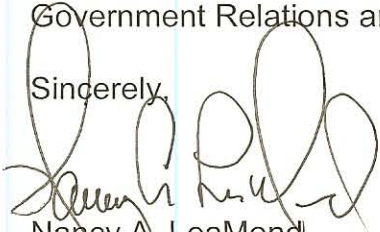
AARP is pleased that the Middle Class Task Force has proposed increased funding for the National Family Caregiver Support Program, home and community-based services that help older adults live in their homes, and the Lifespan Respite Care Program. Approximately 65 million Americans provide care to a loved one, with family caregivers giving about \$375 billion worth of unpaid care a year—often at their own emotional and financial expense. AARP strongly supports increased funding for these programs that provide critical services to family caregivers, such as respite care, training, counseling, information and assistance in locating services, as well as transportation, personal care, adult day care, and other services to help individuals remain in their homes and communities. The vast majority (89 percent) of individuals age 50 and older want to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Family caregivers help many individuals do just that and are the backbone of long-term services and supports in this country. The Middle Class Task Force's proposal takes an important step to support individuals in their caregiving roles.

AARP also appreciates the inclusion of the Automatic Individual Retirement Account (Auto IRA) proposal in the Middle Class Task Force's recommendations. Currently, around 78 million workers in the United States – half of the American workforce – have no access to a retirement savings plan at work. As a result, the vast majority of these Americans will very likely be financially ill-prepared for their retirement years. Auto IRA will provide an easy way for Americans to save for their retirement at work through payroll deductions, to invest in accounts they can take with them when they change jobs, and most importantly, to feel more secure about their financial future. AARP firmly believes that all Americans should have access to a simple way to save for retirement at work and strongly supports Auto IRA.

Vice President Joe Biden
February 26, 2010
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The Auto IRA and caregiving proposals would help strengthen retirement security and support caregivers helping their loved ones. We commend you and the Middle Class Task Force for your leadership on these issues. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact Tom Nicholls or Rhonda Richards of our Government Relations and Advocacy staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy A. LeaMond', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Nancy A. LeaMond
Executive Vice President
Social Impact