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The Honorable Herb Kohl
Chairman
Special Committee on Aging
G31 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl:

National Center on
Caregiving
Family Care Navigator
Innovations Clearinghouse

Bay Area Caregiver
Resource Center

Individual & Family
Consultation
Classes, Workshops &
Retreats

Research, Policy &
Technical Assistance

Caregiver and Professional
Publications & Training

Online Services

Link2Care
Support Groups

A nonprofit, tax-exempt
organization

On behalf of the National Center on Caregiving at Family Caregiver Alliance, I am writing to support the “Strengthening Services for America’s Seniors Act.” The amendments to the Older Americans Act will help improve the identification, assessment, and support of family caregivers who provide \$450 billion in unpaid care every year.

The proposed state grant program to implement uniform family caregiver assessments and provide these caregivers with referrals is an important step forward in our nation’s support system for informal family caregivers.

Assessment of caregivers using a uniform assessment tool acknowledges the caregiver (separate from the care recipient) and can be used to connect them with supportive services including respite, counseling, education, personal care, legal and financial planning, support groups, and more. All of these services are important for caregivers; over three decades of research has found that they face increased risks of poor health, depression, and chronic stress. We also support the reporting requirement because it can enable better-informed policymaking about programs funded by the Older Americans Act and challenges faced by caregivers.

We applaud the provisions to expand and support the National Ombudsman Resource Center’s capacity to ensure that residents of long-term care settings are receiving safe and appropriate care. In addition, the proposed Advisory Council to coordinate and streamline senior benefits and legal service programs is also important and timely, especially with recent Pew projections that 19,000 baby boomers will turn 65 every day- for the next 19 years.

Caregivers are integral to allowing people to “age in place” and this legislation will help enable people to serve as caregivers without compromising their own health.

Sincerely,



Kathleen A. Kelly
Executive Director