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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Family caregivers providing care to loved ones help make it possible for older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans to live independently in their homes and communities, and they are the backbone of the care system in Illinois and across the United States; and

WHEREAS, AARP, a national nonprofit dedicated to empowering people to choose how they live as they age, has released data to show the significant challenges family caregivers experience; and

WHEREAS, There are approximately 1.3 million family caregivers in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Family caregivers in the State provide an estimated 1.21 billion hours of unpaid care annually at an economic value of \$21 billion; and

WHEREAS, Providing care to a loved one can create a financial challenge for family caregivers, with them spending more than \$7,200 per year in out-of-pocket costs on average nationally, or a quarter of their income on caregiving activities, with African American and Hispanic/Latino caregivers on average spending a higher percentage of their

1 income on caregiving responsibilities; and

2 WHEREAS, Family caregivers include all unpaid individuals  
3 of all ages who are caring for individuals with disabilities,  
4 chronic or other health conditions, and/or functional  
5 limitations; and

6 WHEREAS, Family caregivers, who perform a wide range of  
7 care, from providing assistance with a variety of activities  
8 such as meal preparation, bathing, dressing, transportation,  
9 and managing finances to handling more intensive tasks such as  
10 nursing and wound care, medication management, and care  
11 coordination, are vital to enabling older adults and persons  
12 with disabilities to remain living in their homes and  
13 communities; and

14 WHEREAS, Despite the fact that providing care in homes and  
15 communities is generally less costly than providing care in  
16 institutional settings, financial strains associated with  
17 family caregiving arise from several factors, and these may  
18 include needing to cut back on hours at work, taking unpaid  
19 leave, retiring early, or even quitting a job; and

20 WHEREAS, In the workplace, family caregivers often face  
21 loss of earnings, job insecurity, and a lack of promotions,  
22 health insurance, and employer retirement contributions; and

1           WHEREAS, Many family caregivers report that financial  
2 challenges from caregiving have caused them to resort to  
3 adverse financial strategies, such as withdrawing savings,  
4 cutting back on their own health care spending, decreasing  
5 contributions towards retirement, and taking loans to make  
6 ends meet; and

7           WHEREAS, The emotional toll of family caregivers rises  
8 when the responsibilities of the caregiver role increase,  
9 including the amount and duration of care and the performance  
10 of medical or nursing duties, in addition to the perceived  
11 lack of choice in taking on the caregiver role; and

12           WHEREAS, Chronic stress caused by family caregiving may  
13 have negative health impacts on the caregiver which may result  
14 in depression, psychological distress, decreased self-care,  
15 and poorer physical health; and

16           WHEREAS, Caregiver training, respite care, and other  
17 supports are powerful tools that make an intensely difficult  
18 job easier and enable family caregivers to carry on with their  
19 responsibilities, prevent burnout and injury, and better  
20 manage the variety of duties they take on in order to provide  
21 the best possible care to their loved ones; and

1           WHEREAS, It is important for Illinois to be committed to  
2           enacting solutions to support family caregivers in their  
3           efforts to provide care to loved ones, allowing residents to  
4           safely and comfortably age in their own homes, helping to  
5           preserve communities, and avoiding the expense of  
6           institutional care; and

7           WHEREAS, Demand for these programs is high, but funding is  
8           limited, and more needs to be done to improve the plight of  
9           family caregivers; and

10          WHEREAS, It is imperative to understand, recognize, and  
11          support the compassionate and difficult work done by family  
12          caregivers in Illinois and throughout the U.S.; and

13          WHEREAS, The Illinois Family Caregiver Coalition was  
14          created in December 2021 and now includes over 300 members who  
15          make up a diverse representation of unpaid, informal  
16          caregivers and organizations who serve and/or interact with  
17          unpaid family caregivers across the State; and

18          WHEREAS, The Illinois Area Agencies on Aging have  
19          developed a statewide network of caregiver resource centers to  
20          serve unpaid family and informal caregivers; and

21          WHEREAS, The Illinois Family Caregiver Coalition and the

1 Illinois Area Agencies on Aging were selected to represent  
2 Illinois and were recognized at the inaugural National Family  
3 Caregiver Conference in Washington, D.C. in late October 2023,  
4 with Illinois being one of only 10 states invited to  
5 participate in this national conference and advocacy day;  
6 therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
8 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
9 we urge the passage of important policies to better support  
10 family caregivers, particularly by enacting policies that:

11 (1) Provide increased funding for Illinois' Community  
12 Care Program, Home Delivered Meals, the Illinois Family  
13 Caregiver Act, Illinois Area Agencies on Aging, Illinois  
14 Case Coordination Units, Long-Term and Home Care  
15 Ombudsman, and other older adult programs and resources  
16 for Illinois caregivers at the Illinois Department on  
17 Aging and other State agencies, and examine policy changes  
18 to improve the navigability of these resources;

19 (2) Improve the inclusion of family caregivers in  
20 their loved one's care and hospital discharge and  
21 planning, and provide them with the education, training,  
22 and support they need, including as their loved one moves  
23 from one place of care to another, in Hospital at Home  
24 programs, in Medicare more broadly, and in measures of  
25 provider engagement with and in support of family

1 caregivers and family caregivers' experience of care and  
2 support, and support veterans and their caregivers;

3 (3) Increase access to options and eligibility for  
4 care at home, including but not limited to providing  
5 permanent financial protections for the spouses of  
6 individuals receiving Medicaid Home and Community Based  
7 Services, incentivizing Home and Community Based Services  
8 expansion, expanding caregiver and senior support options  
9 and resources in the State's Community Care Program, and  
10 more;

11 (4) Attract and retain direct care workers through  
12 increased pay and benefits, improved training, career  
13 pathways, and other job improvement initiatives; and

14 (5) Provide financial relief for family caregivers,  
15 such as through a family caregiver income tax credit, to  
16 help offset a portion of caregiving expenses paid by  
17 caregivers; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
19 delivered to all Illinois constitutional officers, the Speaker  
20 and Minority Leader of the Illinois House of Representatives,  
21 and the President and Minority Leader of the Illinois Senate.