

SUPPORTING OUR DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE AND FAMILY CAREGIVERS ACT

Introduced by Senator Tim Kaine

The direct care workforce, which assists older adults and people with disabilities with daily tasks, such as dressing, bathing, and eating, has long experienced staffing shortages in part because of low wages and high turnover. [Currently](#), 4.7 million workers – including nearly 2.6 million home care workers, 647,500 workers in residential homes, and about 471,000 nursing home workers – make up the direct care workforce. The industry is [expected to grow by more than a million jobs by 2030](#), not including the jobs that will need to be filled as workers leave the field or the labor force. Better pay and benefits, strategies to recruit and retain professionals in the field, education and training enhancements, and better career advancement opportunities are some of the investments needed to meet the demands of this workforce shortage.

The shortage of direct care workers often puts pressure on family caregivers. It is estimated that nearly [1 in 5 Americans](#) provide unpaid care, and [23% of caregivers](#) say that caregiving has worsened their own health.

The *Supporting Our Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregivers Act* makes a substantial investment in the direct care workforce and supports for family caregivers. Specifically, the bill:

- Directs the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Administration for Community Living (ACL), to award grants to states or other eligible entities for initiatives to build, retain, train, and otherwise promote the direct care workforce, and to provide grants for states or other eligible entities for educational and training support for both paid and unpaid family caregivers.
- Directs ACL to develop a technical assistance center to grant awardees and other entities interested in direct care workforce development and supporting family caregivers. The assistance at the center includes:
 - Working with states, key stakeholders, and other interested entities to establish **career development and advancement strategies** for direct care professionals, which may include occupational frameworks, national standards, recruitment campaigns, pre-apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities, apprenticeship programs, career ladders or pathways, specializations or certifications, or other activities.
 - Exploring the **national data gaps, workforce shortage areas, and data collection strategies** for direct care professionals.
 - Developing recommendations for **training and education curricula** for direct care professionals and family caregivers.

- Disseminating **information and best practices** from lessons learned through the grants

Cosponsors: Bob Casey (D-PA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Jack Reed (D-RI), Tina Smith (D-MN), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

Supporting organizations: American Association on Health and Disability, American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), the Arc of the United States, A Better Balance, Care in Action, Caring Across Generations, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Cure SMA, Economic Policy Institute, Family Values @ Work, Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network, Justice in Aging, Lakeshore Foundation, the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals, Inc. (NADSP), PHI, Main Street Alliance, the National Domestic Workers Alliance, National Women’s Law Center, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).