



the compassion to care, the leadership to conquer

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ALZHEIMER'S BREAKTHROUGH ACT
- Alzheimer's Association Statement -

Washington, DC (July 23, 2009) – For the more than 5 million people living with Alzheimer's disease today and the projected 16 million who may have it by mid-century, *The Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act* (S. 1492 & H.R. 3286) is a tremendous step in the fight against Alzheimer's. The bipartisan legislation, offered in the Senate by Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Christopher Bond (R-MO) and by Representatives Edward Markey (D-MA) and Christopher Smith (R-NJ) in the House, offers great promise for someday having a world without Alzheimer's disease.

With an aging baby boomer population at the epicenter of an escalating Alzheimer crisis, the disease is quickly becoming the country's biggest, broadest and most expensive problem – to individuals, families, and the healthcare system. According to the Alzheimer's Association's *2009 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* report, total healthcare costs are more than three times higher for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias than for other people the same age without the disease. For the last six years, federal funding for Alzheimer research has declined in real terms. In fact, for every dollar the government spends on the costs of Alzheimer care, it invests less than a penny in research to find a cure. This is all while the loss of lives and costs to Medicare and Medicaid continue to soar.

By calling for a significant increase of funding for Alzheimer's at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to \$2 billion, this legislation authorizes the necessary resources to restore momentum in the pursuit of better diagnosis, prevention and treatment. Advances and progress in the various areas of Alzheimer research have the potential to save millions of lives and save billions of dollars to the nation's public health programs. The Alzheimer's Association enthusiastically supports this legislation and sees it as a necessary vehicle to change the paradigm as we know it today.

Equally important as investing in the research that can yield breakthroughs in the near future, is helping the nearly 10 million Alzheimer caregivers today who wrestle with the financial and emotional challenges of caring for a loved one with this disease. *The Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act* seeks to provide them with vital resources and tools to assist them in this demanding role. It also calls for a National Summit on Alzheimer's to look at promising research avenues and programs that are important in fighting this disease and supporting those who are struggling with it.

Alzheimer's disease poses tremendous human, social and economic burdens on the nation as a whole and is a challenge to us all. The Alzheimer's Study Group, an independent group of national leaders led by co-chairs Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and former

Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey, revealed in their report, “A National Alzheimer’s Strategic Plan,” that the government is on track to spend nearly \$20 trillion on Alzheimer’s between today and the middle of the century. The cosponsors of this legislation understand there must be a commitment to ending Alzheimer’s that matches the magnitude of the disease.

The Alzheimer’s Association commends the following Congressional members for their leadership in championing this bill: Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Richard Burr (R-NC), and Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY). In the House, we thank Representatives Gene Green (D-TX), Steven LaTourette (R-OH), Henry Waxman (D-CA), Todd Platts (R-PA), Ron Kind (D-WI), Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ), Christopher Murphy (D-CT), Betty Sutton (D-OH), Steven LaTourette (R-OH), Russ Carnahan (D-MO), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Nick Rahall (D-WV), Bobby Rush (D-IL), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Louise Slaughter (D-NY), John Tierney (D-MA), Robert Wexler (D-FL), and John Yarmuth (D-KY).

The Association urges all members of Congress to support and pass this meaningful legislation.

The Alzheimer’s Association

The Alzheimer’s Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s. For more information, visit www.alz.org.

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