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May 26, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell:

As Congress works to provide further relief to Americans impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, I ask that you consider expanding relief for caregivers, who play a critical role in ensuring the safety of some of our nation's most vulnerable individuals. Caregivers would greatly benefit from expanding the Economic Impact Payments for adult dependents over the age of 16, and from the ability to utilize a non-refundable tax credit.

Family caregiver shortages existed prior to the onset of COVID-19, and this crisis is only amplifying the critical work of caregivers who support the daily needs of those who may be at greater risk to this virus and who require greater support at home. Caregivers are often forced to sacrifice their personal finances to ensure their family member receives appropriate care from home or other settings. In 2016, on average, family caregivers spent nearly 20 percent of their income on out-of-pocket expenses to support their loved ones. This has caused individuals to sacrifice financial savings, retirement, or even their own health care expenses. COVID-19 further exasperates this issue as individuals providing care face added financial stress due to the economic hardship brought on by this pandemic, such as unplanned expenses, furloughs, layoffs, or reduced work hours.

The CARES Act currently provides an additional \$500 in relief to those receiving Economic Impact Payments with dependents aged 16 or under, mirroring the age limit used for the Child Tax Credit. In many instances, this unintentionally denies adult caregivers from receiving much needed additional relief. To help relieve the strain that caregivers are facing during this unprecedented crisis, I respectfully request that future relief legislation extends eligibility for the additional \$500 in relief to adult dependents.

I also encourage you to consider inclusion of my bipartisan Credit for Caring Act, which would provide a non-refundable federal tax credit of up to \$3,000 to eligible family caregivers to help address the financial challenges of caregiving. This proposal has enjoyed bipartisan support during multiple sessions of Congress, and is even more urgently needed in the face of COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and for your leadership in providing relief to American families during these extraordinary times.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator

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