



September 29, 2006

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to send my congratulations as you close the 5<sup>th</sup> International Respite Conference and establish the International Network for Respite Care.

The issues of family caregiving cross not only generational, disability, and economic lines; they cross geographical lines as well. As you have all demonstrated this week, the need for respite is an international one that is growing.

In the United States, more than 50 million family caregivers provide over \$300 billion in uncompensated care. They do this with love, but often at a great emotional and physical cost to themselves and other family members. Too often, support services that would ease the burden are out of reach or unavailable.

I am proud to have sponsored United States Senate legislation, the *Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2005*, to help make respite more accessible and affordable to family caregivers regardless of their age, disability or family situation. I also cosponsored several other pieces of legislation that would help our older citizens age in place, improve mental health services for the aging population, and provide much needed services to kinship caregivers, notably the growing number of grandparents who are the primary caregivers of their grandchildren.

The support for the *Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2005* has been overwhelmingly bipartisan. The National Respite Coalition and its partners representing over 80 national organizations have worked tirelessly to educate and advocate on behalf of this legislation.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and the new International Respite Association. Together we can reach international solutions to this worldwide need.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hillary Rodham Clinton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Hillary Rodham Clinton