

***An estimated 34 million Americans provide care for an aging relative; November is National Family Caregivers Month***

Commack, NY— FRIDAY, Rep. Steve Israel (D–Long Island) announced two new bills aimed at assisting families who are caring for an aging relative. Israel was joined by Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern, Alzheimer’s Association Long Island Chapter CEO MaryAnn Malack Ragona, and Ginnie Moore, a Long Islander who put her career on hold to care for her mother who is suffering from Alzheimer’s.

“Right now, 34 million Americans are caring for an aging relative. Unpaid family caregivers provide the equivalent of \$350 billion a year in services, and all too often their efforts are overlooked,” said Rep. Steve Israel. “Today I’m announcing a plan that will increase assistance for family caregivers. Many of the families who provide elder care are also taking care of their children, working regular jobs, and trying to stay ahead amid a struggling economy. Congress needs to do more to help middle class families succeed. Additional support for caregivers will make it possible for families to ensure their parents and grandparents are cared for in the years to come.”

Suffolk County Legislator Steve Stern said, “This announcement is particularly timely since November is ‘National Family Caregivers Month.’ I am proud to support Congressman Israel’s initiative to help those who are caring for their loved ones within our communities, and to provide necessary support that allows the most vulnerable to remain a part of their communities.”

“I consider it a privilege to care for my mother at this time in her life, however, the personal and professional sacrifices have weighed heavy on me at times ... and still do,” said Ginnie Moore of Sayville, NY. “In order to be the daughter she raised me to be I have ‘taken a break’ from my career and dedicated my time to enabling her to enjoy the quality of life she is entitled to. Yet, in order for us to continue to provide the present level of care and ultimately to step it up to meet her future needs will require some assistance from local, state and federal government – I wish this was not the case, but it is.”

As chairman and founder of the Democratic Middle Class Working Group, Rep. Israel is pushing a “Middle Class Success Agenda” that includes two bills addressing elder care. Rep. Israel introduced H.R. 7020, the Elder Caregiver Support and Information Enhancement Act of 2008, which increases funding for the National Family Caregiver Support Program from \$166 million to \$250 million, and authorizes a \$10 million long-term care information campaign. The National Family Caregiver Support Program provides money to states so they can fund caregiver support efforts including increased information for caregivers, counseling, training, support groups, respite care, and other services. The increased funds will allow the program to reach a larger number of middle class families.

The Elder Care Tax Credit Act of 2008, H.R. 7036, also part of the Working Group’s “Middle Class Success Agenda,” was sponsored by Rep. Israel with Rep. Nancy Boyda (D-KS). The bill

extends the dependent care tax credit to families who are caring for aging relatives who do not live in their home. This will allow more families to receive up to a \$1,200 tax credit for qualified elder care expenses. Fewer than half of all caregivers live with the person they care for.

November is recognized as National Family Caregivers Month in an effort by the National Family Caregivers Association to thank, support, educate and empower family caregivers.

According to the AARP:

- In November 2006 between 30 and 38 billion family caregivers provided care to adults at an average of 21 hours per week and 1080 hours per year.
- The average cost of a private room in a nursing home for one year in the U.S. is \$77,745; in New York, the average expense jumps to \$134,320
- The average cost of adult day care in the U.S. is \$61 per day; in New York, the average is \$90 per day.
- Assuming a low cost of \$9.63 per hour and an average of 1080 hours a year, unpaid family caregiving activities were valued at \$350 billion in 2006. \$350 billion dollars is as much as the total spending for the Medicare program (\$342 billion in 2005) and more than the total spending for Medicaid (\$300 billion in 2005).

Rep. Israel serves on the House Appropriations Committee.