

To: Platform Committee 2016, California Democratic Party
Candelaria Vargas, California Platform Committee
(candelaria@cadem.org)
Norman Chramoff, Co-Chair, California Platform Committee
(nchramoff@yahoo.com)

From: Naomi Kirschenbaum, Family Caregiver Platform Project
(nskaah@gmail.com)

Date: August 11, 2015

RE: Proposal to add a "Family Caregivers" section to the California
Democratic Party Platform 2016

I represent the Family Caregiver Platform Project, a non-partisan group that seeks to raise awareness of family caregiving issues in California and nationally. For more information about our goals, visit our website at caregivercorps.org.

I respectfully request that the Platform Committee add a section to the 2016 California Democratic platform titled "Family Caregivers" containing specific policy recommendations. If the Platform Committee prefers to include Family Caregiving issues within existing sections of the current platform, I have noted existing sections where language could be inserted.

WHY WE THINK THESE CHANGES ARE NECESSARY

In order to allow seniors to manage their care and remain in their homes, family caregivers who meet the needs of these seniors must be recognized and supported. The six million caregivers in the state of California whose commitment and labor make this possible require recognition and commitment from policy makers to facilitate the tasks and care they provide.

Caregivers need working knowledge of the medical needs and management plans for the people under their care. Caregivers must be able to meet the practical needs of the long-term care patients they

serve. We must leverage their potential capabilities, when appropriate, to share in performing medical tasks. As well, we must recognize the public health consequences and health considerations that directly affect the caregivers.

The essential delivery of quality caregiving requires healthy and robust communities to deliver effective caregiving to our frail and elderly populations. Volunteerism, compassion, and a realistic understanding of the magnitude a successful effort requires to keep seniors in their homes, with the attendant support they need, cannot happen without community commitment.

The economic realities for many affected parties will place an enormous financial burden and demand on the state and the private economy. Economic impacts include health care costs, burdens to employers coping with family caregiver needs of their employees, the loss of wages and retirement contributions affecting the family caregiver, and the increasing ranks of elderly who will require caregiving in the next decades. We need to prepare for those challenges now.

SPECIFIC “FAMILY CAREGIVERS” SECTION CONTENT

1. Recognize caregiving as a health risk factor that warrants public health attention to encourage health professionals to acknowledge and address the issues. (Health Care)
2. Support expansion of effective interventions that provide family caregivers with support groups, respite care, assistive technologies, and other proven supportive services. (Health Care or Disabilities)
3. Expand the availability of training and professional guidance to help family caregivers by encouraging both public and private initiatives. (Seniors or Health Care or Disabilities)

4. Increase participation in educational programs among diverse caregivers through culturally and linguistically appropriate offerings. (Health Care or Disabilities)
5. Implement requirements for family caregivers to be informed and educated about ongoing care plans at the time of discharge and at other key points in the healthcare process. (Health Care)
6. Examine the feasibility of reducing health costs and improving the quality of patient care by granting authority to registered nurses to train and delegate some tasks to family caregivers. (Health Care)
7. Encourage efforts at the state and county level to analyze population demographic trends to determine both current and future service requirements for care recipients and caregivers, and to permit data-driven policy and program recommendations about our aging populations and the workforce development needed to empower those who need care to heal, age and live in place.
8. Recognize and address the financial burden of caregiving and work to protect families from impoverishment at all levels of care. (Sustainable Communities)
9. Encourage employers to establish policies that recognize the impact that caregiving can have on workers, and encourage employers to find ways to support their workers during difficult family times. (Business and Economy)
10. Support recognizing the economic value of family caregiving and, as appropriate, compensation of that value through tax credits or other means. Enable family caregivers to continue funding their own retirement and Social Security during their period of caring service. (Business and Economy)

REFERENCES

Family Caregiver Platform Project: Caregiver Platform Planks

<http://caregivercorps.org/planks/>

A Shattered System: Reforming Long Term-Care in California

California State Senate Select Committee on Aging and Long Term Care

January 5, 2015

<http://sd25.senate.ca.gov/sites/sd25.senate.ca.gov/files/AgingLong%20TermCareReport.pdf>

Valuing the Invaluable: 2011 Update, The Economic Value of Family Caregiving. AARP Public Policy Institute

<http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2015/valuing-the-invaluable-2015-update-new.pdf>

The MetLife Study of Caregiving Costs to Working Caregivers (2008 data)

<https://www.metlife.com/mmi/research/caregiving-cost-working-caregivers.html#key%20findings>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging

Aging Statistics (2003 -2013 data)

http://www.aoa.acl.gov/Aging_Statistics/index.aspx

Family Caregiver Alliance - National Center on Caregiving

Selected Long-term Care Statistics - Family and Informal Caregivers

(1982 - 2015 data)

<https://caregiver.org/selected-long-term-care-statistics>

Alzheimer's Association

State Alzheimer's Disease Plans: Caregivers: California

<http://act.alz.org/site/DocServer/CAREGIVERS.pdf?docID=4644>

Alzheimer's Association Fact Sheet

Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures 2012

[http://www.alz.org/documents_custom/-
2012_facts_figures_fact_sheet.pdf](http://www.alz.org/documents_custom/-2012_facts_figures_fact_sheet.pdf)