



Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham's National Care Corps Act

Background: By 2030, there will be more than 72 million older Americans, making up 19% of the total population. As they age, many of these seniors will require long-term supports and services, placing a huge burden on a fragmented system that is already struggling to provide and finance care for current seniors and individuals with disabilities who want to remain independent and receive services in their homes and communities.

Currently, the vast majority of care is provided by family caregivers; more than 43 million Americans provide more than \$520 billion in care to seniors and adults with disabilities every year. These caregivers fill a critical void, often because the lack of access to affordable services gives them no other choice. Many of those who need care cannot afford to pay for the services that would help them remain independent, but they have just enough money to be ineligible for Medicaid and the support services it would provide. Their family members pitch in to fill in the gaps where they can, keeping their loved ones out of high-cost nursing homes. These family caregivers often develop ailments of their own and need outside support to ensure that they can live healthy, productive lives and continue caring for their loved ones.

At the same time, there simply aren't enough family caregivers to meet the growing need. In 2010, there were seven potential caregivers for every person over the age of 80. By 2030, that ratio is projected to drop by almost half, to 4:1. In the paid workforce, 4 million direct care workers provide long term supports and services to individuals in need already. But there, too, demand is projected to grow so that the U.S. will need to add at least 1 million more direct care workers over the next ten years.

Meanwhile, our economy continues to feel the effects of the Great Recession. Many young people are unemployed or underemployed, while other workers are retraining for more in-demand fields.

These are national challenges that require a national solution: Care Corps.

National Care Corps Act:

- Creates a national Care Corps, housed within the Administration for Community Living at the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Places Corps volunteers in communities where they will provide services that help seniors and individuals with disabilities remain independent.
- Provides volunteers with health insurance and other benefits during their time of service, along with an educational award that can be used to pay education costs or loans.
- Helps build the caregiving and health care work force needed to meet the demand for services.
- Creates an opportunity for intergenerational relationships.