



NEWS

From the Illinois Senate

State Senator Dave Koehler

For immediate release
March 12, 2008

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Koehler sponsored Family Member Caregiver Initiative passes Illinois Senate Human Service Committee

SPRINGFIELD – Legislation sponsored by State Senator Dave Koehler (D-Peoria) in the Illinois Senate will help legally responsible adult caregivers of patients with incapacitating diseases collect the resources necessary to care for their spouses in their own homes. The measure passed an Illinois Senate committee Wednesday and will now go to the full Illinois Senate for consideration.

The Family Member Caregiver Initiative is modeled after laws in other states that allow payments to legally responsible adult caregivers. Specifically, the bill is designed to prevent the breakup of families due to debilitating or terminal diseases by allowing spouses to care for loved ones who have been stricken with incapacitating diseases, such as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also known as ALS, or Multiple Sclerosis, also known as MS, for example.

“This is a big step forward in allowing spouses to be able to care for their loved ones should they, unfortunately, be stricken with a horrible, incapacitating disease. Many other states have this option and by giving the residents of Illinois this option, we are providing families a chance to stay together and fight these horrible diseases together,” Senator Koehler said.

The Family Member Caregiver Initiative would be administered by the Department of Human Services, in conjunction with the Department of Healthcare and Family Services. The program would allow legally responsible adults to be reimbursed by the state for providing care to eligible clients.

The details of the program make certain the caregivers receive the proper training needed to care for the patient and ensure that the needs of the client are being met. Also provided for in the bill are a fair reimbursement rate and measures to protect the state from fraud and waste. Another stipulation of the bill provides that the Departments involved should provide a report to the General Assembly on how the program progresses once it is put into place in order to properly evaluate it.

“I’m pleased to see there is bi – partisan support for this bill. Under the old rules, it seems we are encouraging families to split apart, but with this bill we are encouraging them to stay together and continue the battle against the disease inflicting their loved one,” Koehler said.

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