



# NEWS

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From the Illinois Senate

*State Senator Dave Koehler*

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## **Koehler announces Family Member Caregiver Initiative** **Bill to help spousal caregivers of patients with debilitating diseases to care for their loved ones at home**

**SPRINGFIELD** – State Senator Dave Koehler (D-Peoria) introduced legislation in the Illinois Senate to help spousal caregivers of patients with incapacitating diseases collect the resources necessary to care for their spouses in their own homes.

The Family Member Caregiver Initiative is modeled after laws in other states that allow payments to spousal caregivers and is designed to prevent the breakup of families due to debilitating or terminal diseases.

“After meeting with families who, rather than break up the family and put one spouse in an institutionalized setting would instead prefer to take care of that spouse at home, I have filed legislation to address this problem. Many other states currently allow spousal caregivers the right to care for their stricken spouses at home. I feel Illinois should be among those enlightened states,” 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 were 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 proceeds once it is put into place in order to properly evaluate it.

“Spouses who wish to care for their loved ones at home should be allowed the option of doing just that and keeping them from doing so is wrong. By filing this bill, we are starting a process to allow families to stay together through what will be the most trying times of their lives and we should do what we can to keep families together, not tear them apart,” Koehler said.

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