

Statement of Support: S4930 (Diaz) / A3958 (Dinowitz)

In relation to the provision of guides containing best practices for retaining employees who are informal caregivers

More than five million Americans and almost 400,000 New Yorkers have Alzheimer's disease and dementia. By 2025, this number is expected to increase to 460,000. The disease is fatal, and there is no treatment. More than one million New Yorkers are caregivers providing financial, physical and emotional support to those with dementia. They provided 1.2 billion hours of unpaid care in 2016 valued at \$14 billion.

In conjunction with the Department of Labor, and in consultation with community-based organizations representing the interests of informal caregivers, the Office for Aging would develop and update annually a guide for businesses that contains best practices for retaining employees who are also informal caregivers. The guide would include information to support these employees so they can be effective both at and outside of work, and would be available on the websites of the Office, the Department of Labor and the Department of State.

The care that dementia caregivers provide is wide-ranging and in some instances, all-encompassing, extending from bathing and feeding to helping with incontinence. Although these responsibilities are similar to those of caregivers for people with other conditions, dementia caregivers often provide more extensive assistance, and due to the stress and strain, had \$848 million higher healthcare costs than other caregivers in 2016. In addition, 54% of dementia caregivers had to go in late to work, leave early or take time off; 15% had to take a leave of absence; and 15% had to go from full-time to part-time work to fulfill their responsibilities. Almost 60% said their stress is "high to very high." New York State employers either currently have or will have employees who are caregivers. This will have a lasting effect on the workplace.

Given the trajectory of growth of Alzheimer's disease, it behooves New York employers to understand the impact the disease could have on their workplaces and to understand and provide support for the difficulties their caregiving employees might face every day.

The Coalition supports S4930/A3958 to create employer guides containing best practices for retaining employees who are informal caregivers.

About the Coalition

The Alzheimer's Association, New York State Coalition is the leading statewide organization advocating for all New Yorkers affected by Alzheimer's disease and dementia. The Coalition advances public policy, increases concern and awareness of Alzheimer's disease and the services available through the Alzheimer's Association, and provides and enhances care and support. We have a diverse and bilingual staff of specialists and master's-level clinicians who work with constituents in person or over the phone and through our free 24-hour Helpline.