



**JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE**  
SENATOR CHARLES E. SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN  
REPRESENTATIVE CAROLYN B. MALONEY, VICE CHAIR



## **JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE HEARING: “ARE THE EXPLOSIVE COSTS OF ELDER CARE HURTING FAMILY FINANCES AND BUSINESS COMPETITION?”**

**Prepared Statement of Carolyn Maloney, Vice Chair**

**May 16, 2007**

Thank you, Chairman Schumer. I want to thank Senator Klobuchar and her staff for working with the JEC in putting together this hearing on the very important topic of elder care.

Many families find themselves facing the dual challenges of raising their children and caring for their aging parents, while also working. We call them the “sandwich generation” because they are caught between the competing claims on their time, financial resources and emotions.

Most of the elderly in our country live at home and rely on family for help with the daily activities that many of us take for granted -- bathing, dressing, eating, doing laundry, and washing dishes. Adult children, particularly women, provide most of the unpaid care for their elderly parents. It is not always easy to watch your parents age, but many adult children provide this essential care so that their parents may grow old with dignity in familiar surroundings.

The majority of these daughters work full-time, but many report taking time out of the work force, cutting back on hours, and losing or turning down opportunities for training or promotion because of their care giving responsibilities. As Dr. Johnson points out in his testimony, last year women care givers forfeited about \$8,600 in compensation per year, on average, due to reduced work hours. Clearly, unpaid care giving has an impact on women's economic security and their ability to save for their children's education and their own retirement.

The lack of flexible work schedules can also be hard on care givers. More and more businesses are finding that, as Mr. Weisberg will tell us, in the so-called “war for talent” employers must adjust to the care giving needs of workers in order to attract and retain the skilled labor force that allows them to remain competitive in an increasingly global marketplace. Doing right by families can also improve companies’ bottom lines, such as lowering turnover rates of trained workers and absenteeism.

Encouraging employers to do more to accommodate their workers' family care giving responsibilities is essential. But Congress must also examine ways to expand paid family and medical leave.

Finally, family members must navigate a complex maze of medical, financial, insurance, and legal issues, so the one-stop shopping approach to care coordination that Ms. Wilcox's organization provides is an interesting model for us to study.

The sandwich generation will only grow as the baby boomers age, so we must confront the challenges of elder care now.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Klobuchar, thank you for holding this important hearing and I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.