

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**REP. JERRY COSTELLO SPONSORS LANDMARK LEGISLATION  
ADDRESSING ESCALATING ALZHEIMER CRISIS**

**CARTERVILLE** – The Alzheimer's Association – Greater Illinois Chapter commends Rep. Jerry Costello for cosponsoring the "*Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act of 2009*" H.R. 3286. For the more than 5 million people nationwide living with Alzheimer's, and the 210,000 living right here in Illinois it is a tremendous step in the fight against the disease and offers great promise for someday having a world without Alzheimer's.

With an aging baby boomer population soon to be at the epicenter of an escalating Alzheimer crisis, the disease is quickly becoming the country's biggest, broadest and most expensive problem – to individuals, families, and the healthcare system. According to the Alzheimer's Association's *2009 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* report, total healthcare costs are more than three times higher for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias than for other people the same age without the disease. For the last six years, federal funding for Alzheimer research has declined in real terms. In fact, for every dollar the government spends on the costs of Alzheimer care, it invests less than a penny in research to find a cure. This is all while the loss of lives and costs to Medicare and Medicaid continue to soar.

This legislation authorizes a significant increase in funding for Alzheimer research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to \$2 billion to restore momentum to the pursuit of better diagnosis, prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's disease. "The Alzheimer's Association commends Rep. Jerry Costello his recognition of the growing threat of Alzheimer's," said Erna Colborn, president and CEO for the Chapter. "By supporting the *Alzheimer Breakthrough Act*, Rep. Costello has signaled his understanding of the grave threat Alzheimer's poses to the residents of Illinois and the nation."

In addition to the increase in research funding, this legislation provides much needed support for the nearly 10 million caregivers nationwide, including the 349,614 Alzheimer caregivers who live in Illinois. Every day these individuals grapple with the emotional, physical and financial challenges of caring for someone with Alzheimer's or a related dementia. The bill provides vital resources and tools to assist caregivers in their demanding role. It also calls for a national summit on Alzheimer's to look at promising research possibilities and programs that are important in fighting this disease and supporting those who are struggling with it.

Alzheimer's disease poses tremendous human, social and economic burdens on the nation and its effects will be a challenge to us all. The *Alzheimer Breakthrough Act* is a significant step forward in the fight against this disease. The Greater Illinois Chapter thanks Rep. Costello for his leadership in supporting this meaningful legislation that is so vital for Illinois and the nation.

**About the Alzheimer's Association** - The Alzheimer's Association, the world leader in Alzheimer research and support, is the largest voluntary health organization dedicated to finding prevention methods, treatments and cure for Alzheimer's. Since 1980, the donor supported, nonprofit Alzheimer's Association has provided reliable information and care consultation; created supportive services for families; increased funding for dementia research; and influenced public policy changes. **The Greater Illinois Chapter** serves dozens of counties with offices in Bloomington, Carterville, Chicago, Joliet, Rockford and Springfield. For more information, call our Helpline at 800-272-3900 or visit [www.alz.org/illinois](http://www.alz.org/illinois).