

Give Caregivers (Tax) Credit, Clinton Says

U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton on Sunday proposed a tax credit offsetting up to \$6,000 in costs associated with caring for elderly and disabled family members, and allowing caregivers to accrue Social Security retirement benefits for such work.

The maximum value of the caregiving credit would be \$1,200 for qualifying families and is the latest in a series of tax proposals Clinton plans to introduce aimed at boosting the middle class.

“That will help family budgets stretch, it will help seniors maintain independence,” Clinton said Sunday at a campaign stop in Iowa, which holds the first party-nominating contest in February.

Clinton has previously announced a tax credit of \$2,500 for an individual or \$5,000 for a family to cover high healthcare costs and another credit that would cover some of the expense of attending college.

There are about 12 million people in the United States who need long-term care and that number is expected to grow to 27 million by 2050 as the population ages. Clinton said the economic value of the unpaid work provided by family caregivers of the aging and disabled was \$470 billion in 2013.

Assisting adults caring for their aging parents – often while also raising their own children or helping with grandchildren – has become a theme at Clinton’s campaign stops.

Clinton met New Hampshire resident Keith Thompson before a September appearance. Thompson told the former secretary of state and U.S. senator he sometimes takes his elderly mother with him to his part-time job because they cannot otherwise afford reliable care.

“You know your story is so incredibly moving and it’s also a story for so many people, that’s what I keep finding, everywhere I go,” Clinton told Thompson in a video of the exchange provided by the campaign.

Clinton has cited Thompson’s story frequently since.

Taxes are shaping up to be a differentiator between Clinton, the front-runner for the Democratic nomination to run in the November 2016 election, and her challengers, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and former Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley.

Clinton’s campaign says she is committed to not raising but cutting taxes for the middle class and criticized some of Sanders’ proposals, such as his healthcare plan, saying it would necessitate raising taxes on moderate wage earners.

In a statement on Clinton’s tax proposals, Sanders spokesman Michael Briggs said, “It’s too late for tentative half-steps that sound Republican-lite.” {eo}

(Reporting By Amanda Becker; Editing by Adrian Croft and Jonathan Oatis)

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