

December 8, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell,

The undersigned organizations urge you to ensure that important protections for nursing home residents included in the Build Back Better Act recently passed by the House of Representatives are included in the Senate's version of the bill. Considering the great tragedy that befell nursing home residents during the COVID-19 pandemic, now more than ever we must address the long-standing issues in facilities that have been barriers to the provision of quality care and improve the use of taxpayer dollars that pay for a significant portion of nursing home care.

The Build Back Better Act recently passed by the House includes provisions that, if passed, would make a significant difference in the lives of nursing home residents. These provisions¹ (Title XIII, Subtitle B, Sec. 13200, and Subtitle E, Part 3, Secs. 134301-134304) address insufficient staffing by providing a necessary path towards achieving minimum staffing standards; require nursing homes to have a registered nurse on staff 24 hours per day; provides necessary funds to improve the survey and oversight process; address funding that improves the accuracy and reliability of certain skilled nursing facility data; ensures accurate information on Medicare cost reports. The passage of these provisions would result in the most significant increase in protection for nursing home residents in decades and impact the federal funding for this care. Medicare and Medicaid reimburse nursing homes for the care they provide. In recent years, nursing homes annually received more than \$50 billion from Medicaid and more than \$25 billion from Medicare.

More than 186,000² residents and staff in long-term care facilities died of COVID-19. We must take action now to protect and support those living and working in long-term care facilities and prevent such a tragedy from recurring in the future. These provisions in the Build Back Better Act are a critical step in the right direction.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

AARP
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Association on Health and Disability

¹ These provisions are included in the Nursing Home Improvement and Accountability Act (H.R. 5169; S.2694)

² <https://www.aarp.org/ppi/issues/caregiving/info-2020/nursing-home-covid-dashboard.html>

Center for Eldercare Improvement, Altarum
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Consumer Action
Lakeshore Foundation
Long Term Care Community Coalition
NALLTCO - National Association of Local Long Term Care Ombudsman
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
National Council of Gray Panthers Networks
Our Mother's Voice
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

State Organizations

California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform
AAA/SEA Ombudsman Program, Arkansas
Angel LTC Advocacy, Indiana
Area Agency on Aging, Texas
Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington
Arkansas Advocates for Nursing Home Residents, Arkansas
Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE), Pennsylvania
Center for Elder Law & Justice, New York
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York
Community Legal Services of Philadelphia
Delmar Gardens West Family Council, Missouri
Dignity Alliance Massachusetts
Dignity for the Aged, Virginia
Dignity for the Aged Texas Chapter
District Long Term Care Ombudsman, London, Kentucky
East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
Elder Justice Committee of Metro Justice, Rochester, New York
Elder Voice Family Advocates, Minnesota
Empowered Aging, California
EODD Area Agency on Aging, Oklahoma
Family Council of Ellicott City Health Care Center (ECHCC), Maryland
Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
Friends of Residents in Long Term Care, North Carolina
Georgia Council of Community Ombudsman, Atlanta, Georgia
Golden Crescent Ombudsman Program, Victoria, Texas
Gray Panthers Berkeley East Bay, Berkeley, California

Illinois-Iowa Center for Independent Living
Iowa Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Levin & Perconti, Illinois
Life at RCIL, Utica, New York
Long Beach Gray Panthers, California
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, California
Louisiana Democrat Party Disability Caucus
Majestic St. Anthony, Crown Point, Indiana
Massachusetts Advocates for Nursing Home Reform
Michigan Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
Minnesota Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care
Montgomery County MD LTC Ombudsman Program
North Carolina Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Association
Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass, Inc., Kentucky
Nursing Home Victim Coalition, Inc, Austin, Texas
Office of Kansas State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Office of the Colorado State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Office of the Rhode Island State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Office of the Texas State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Ombudsman Services of San Mateo County Inc., California
People Inc., Lake View, New York
Project-Respect Us, Minneapolis, Minnesota
SAVE OUR SENIORS MICHIGAN!
Senior Connections, Richmond, Virginia
Senior Life Source, Carlsbad, California
SeniorCare Inc., Gloucester, Massachusetts
State of Indiana Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
SW Professional Care Mgt., LLC, Delafield, Wisconsin
The Center for At-Risk Elders, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana
The Edgefield Post-Acute, Edgefield, South Carolina
The Family Council, Green House Cottages of Carmel, Indiana
Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments
Vermont Legal Aid
Vermont LTC Ombudsman Project
Voices for Quality Care (LTC), Inc., Silver Spring, MD
Washington State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
Waterview Pines Nursing Home, Virginia, Minnesota