

October 29, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representative
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Schumer and McConnell and Representatives Pelosi and McCarthy:

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, an advocacy group for our nation's 1.3 million nursing home residents, was very pleased to see important protections for nursing home residents included the Build Back Better reconciliation bill released yesterday by the House Rules Committee. The inclusion of these provisions will help ensure that the devastating and catastrophic impact COVID-19 has had on nursing home residents does not recur. Please ensure that this important language is included in the final bill to be voted on by the full House and Senate.

These key provisions¹ were taken directly from the Nursing Home Accountability and Improvement Act (S. 2694) and will address funding that improves the accuracy and reliability of certain skilled nursing facility data; ensure accurate information on Medicare cost reports; provide necessary funds to improve the survey and oversight process; and address insufficient staffing by providing a necessary path towards achieving minimum staffing standards. Research shows that the presence of sufficient staff lowers infections, leads to better outcomes and fewer deaths for residents. The inclusion of these provisions will result in the greatest increase in protections for nursing home residents in decades.

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 to prevent such a tragedy from recurring in the future. This language in the Budget Reconciliation bill is a critical step in the right direction.

Sincerely,



Lori Smetanka
Executive Director

¹ (Title XIII, Subtitle E, Part 3, Secs. 134301-134304)

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

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly NCCNHR) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization founded in 1975 by Elma L. Holder that advocates for quality care and quality of life for consumers in all long-term-care settings.