

June 23, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, and Members of the Senate:

The undersigned write to express our strong opposition to the proposed reconciliation bill that would result in the loss of health coverage for over 16 million individuals, and postpone the implementation of the recently finalized minimum staffing rule. We are organizations that represent, advocate for, and are composed of recipients of Long Term Supports and Services (LTSS), including nursing home and assisted living residents and home and community-based services (HCBS) recipients. The proposed legislation would have a devastating impact on these individuals, likely resulting in loss of health care coverage, increased institutionalization, and poor health outcomes. We urge you to oppose this legislation.

The Proposed Medicaid Cuts in the Reconciliation Package Will Have a Devastating Impact on Older Individuals and People with Disabilities.

Any cut to Medicaid is a cut to all of Medicaid. The draconian cuts proposed in this reconciliation bill will mean fewer dollars going to states to fund critical health programs, including nursing home care and HCBS. Fewer dollars will likely result in decreased provider reimbursement rates, leading to lower quality services, poorer outcomes, and likely resulting in the closures of long-term care facilities. These closures would have a particularly disproportionate impact on individuals living in rural areas, where long-term care service options are much more limited.

Medicaid is the primary funder of all LTSS in the United States, paying for over half of all LTSS.¹ 60% of nursing home residents rely on Medicaid to pay for their care.² For most Americans, Medicaid is the only way they can afford long-term care. Nursing home care is extremely expensive. In 2023, the median annual cost of a private room in a nursing home was \$116,000.³ Without Medicaid, many individuals in need of critical medical services will be forced to go without.

While nursing home services are a mandatory Medicaid service, many Medicaid services are not. The proposed cuts will inevitably force states to cut back on non-mandatory services, 86% of which

¹<https://www.kff.org/health-policy/101-medicaid/?entry=table-of-contents-how-much-does-medicaid-spending-vary-across-enrollee-groups-and-states>

² <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/5-key-facts-about-nursing-facilities-and-medicaid/>

³ Id.

are provided to people with disabilities and older adults.⁴ Over half of this spending is on HCBS. HCBS allows over 7.8 million individuals to receive nursing care services at home, avoiding more costly institutional care.⁵ Faced with Medicaid budget shortfalls, states will be forced to cut HCBS programs, therefore driving more individuals out of their homes and into institutions and further raising costs.

Postponing the Implementation of the Minimum Staffing Rule will Cost 13,000 Lives Annually and Perpetuate Poor Health Outcomes

Last year, a final rule was issued implementing a minimum staffing rule in nursing homes.⁶ The rule was issued after a two-year-long process that included a staffing study, a Request for Information, and a public comment period, which generated more than 40,000 comments. The rule is modest, with over half of nursing homes already meeting or exceeding the overall staffing requirement. Importantly, research conducted since the rule was implemented found that the rule would save over 13,000 lives annually and prevent other harmful outcomes to nursing home residents.⁷

Since the rule was announced, the nursing home industry has opposed it, claiming there are not enough staff to meet the requirements. However, data shows differently. Currently, according to data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the average annual turnover of care staff in a nursing home is 49%, meaning that nursing homes have to replace every other worker annually. There is not a job crisis; there is a job-quality crisis, with the average CNA only making \$18.16 per hour, and 39% of CNAs relying on some kind of public assistance.⁸ Further, the rule provides several opportunities for facilities, which in good faith cannot meet the modest requirements, to obtain hardship exemptions.

In conclusion, the proposed reconciliation package would cause incalculable damage to the lives of LTSS recipients, resulting in less access to long-term care, poorer health outcomes, and increased institutionalization. Postponing the implementation of the nursing home staffing rule will result in tens of thousands of avoidable deaths in nursing homes and perpetuate poor health outcomes. We urge you to stand with older individuals and people with disabilities and reject these draconian cuts.

⁴ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/long-term-services-supports/downloads/ltss-users-expenditures-category-brief-2022.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/long-term-services-supports/downloads/ltss-users-expenditures-category-brief-2022.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/05/10/2024-08273/medicare-and-medicaid-programs-minimum-staffing-standards-for-long-term-care-facilities-and-medicaid>

⁷ https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_researchers_to_sen_warren_070824.pdf

⁸ <https://www.phinational.org/resource/direct-care-workers-in-the-united-states-key-facts-2024/>

Sincerely,

National Organizations

American Association on Health and Disability
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Society on Aging
Bluegrass Ombudsman Agency
Camp Eagle Press
Caregivers For Compromise
Ceca Foundation
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Diverse Elders Coalition
Elder Justice Coalition
Idaho Office of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Lakeshore Foundation
Long Term Care Community Coalition
National Association of Local Long Term Care Ombudsman (NALLTCO)
National Association of Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
Our Mother's Voice
PHI
San Francisco Gray Panthers
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
The Geriatric Circle
The Live Oak Project
Tosh Law Firm, PLLC
United Steelworkers (USW)
Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments
Well Spouse Association

State & Local Organizations

All Ages Care Management, LLC, CT
Alliance of New York Family Councils. NY
Area Agency on Aging, Region One Inc., AZ
Bear River Association of Governments, UT
CA Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, CA
California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, CA
California Long-Term Care Ombudsman Association (CLTCOA), CA
California OneCare Education Fund, CA
Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of Elders (CARIE), PA
Christian & Christian LLC, SC

Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, PA
Cumberland Valley Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, KY
Curtis Care Management, PLLC, NY
Dignity Alliance Massachusetts, MA
Disability Rights Idaho, ID
Disability Rights Maine, ME
Disability Rights New Jersey, NJ
Elder Justice Committee of Metro Justice, NY
Friends of Residents in Long Term Care, NC
Georgia ADAPT NDN, GA
Gharibian Law, CA
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc., WI
Healthy Generations Area Agency on Aging, VA
Hearing Loss Association of America Blair County PA Chapter, PA
Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities, ID
Idaho Parents Unlimited, ID
Idaho State Independent Living Council, ID
Indiana LTC Ombudsman Program, IN
Institutional Rescue and Recovery Coalition, IL
Kansas Advocates for Better Care, KS
Kelinson and Lerner, PLC, IA
Kentucky Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, KY
Legal Assistance for Seniors, CA
Long Term Care Ombudsman Services of San Luis Obispo County, CA
Louisiana Democratic Party Disability Caucus, LA
LTC Ombudsman Program – Nebraska. NE
Mac Dougall Consulting for Disabilities, LLC, CA
Maine Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, ME
Michigan Elder Justice Initiative, MI
MN Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care, MN
New Hampshire Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, NH
NJ Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, NJ
North Carolina Community Advisory Committee, NC
North Carolina Long Term Care Ombudsman Association, NC
Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass, Inc., KY
Office of the Colorado State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, CO
Office of the Texas State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, TX
OK State Council on Aging, OK
Oklahoma Alliance on Aging, OK
Area Agency on Aging, TX
StacyCares Oklahoma, LLC, OK
State of Delaware Office of the Secretary Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, DE
Stavros CIL, MA
Tennessee Justice Center, TN
The Hale Group, IA
The New York State Veterans Home at Montrose Family Council, NY
Vermont Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, VT
Virginia Association of Clinical Nurse Specialist (VaCNS), VA

VOYCE, MO

Washington State LTC Ombudsman Program, WA

WI Board on Aging and Long Term Care, WI

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network, WI

Wise & Healthy Aging, CA