



March 5, 2024

Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairperson Smith and Ranking Members Neal and members of the committee:

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I am writing to urge you to **oppose H.R. 7513**, a bill that would place the most vulnerable population in our health care system – nursing home residents – at permanent risk of poor care and neglect due to understaffing in our nation’s 15,000 nursing homes.

The National Committee is a grassroots advocacy and educational organization dedicated to preserving and strengthening all programs that work to ensure the health and well-being of our nation’s seniors.

As introduced, H.R. 7513 is a prime example of how **not** to reform nursing homes. Rather than improving safety and quality standards for the most vulnerable people in our health care system, the bill would force the Administration to abandon a much-needed staffing standard for nursing facilities participating in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Moreover, this ill-considered measure would permanently prohibit the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from **ever** regulating staffing in nursing homes.

This preemptive move is wholly unacceptable in view of the fact that decades of evidence supports a strong, robust national staffing standard that will protect **all** residents -- regardless of where their nursing home is located. HHS has been working to promulgate a safe staffing standard for more than two years, and there has been ample time for all stakeholders to comment and discuss the standard and provide input. Indeed, the proposed regulation suggested that rural facilities be given as long as five years to come into full compliance.

A national staffing standard is broadly popular among seniors and their families. As AARP has noted, a minimum staffing standard is supported by 89% of Democrats and 74% of Republicans.¹ Given this broad support and HHS’s comprehensive review of the issue over the last two years, the Department **must** be allowed to move forward to finalize staffing requirements. Putting a regulation on hold at the last possible moment, as H.R. 7513 proposes to do, would only result in grave harm not only to residents, but to hard-working staff -- certified nurse aides, nurses, medical directors, social workers,

¹ AARP, *U.S. Voters’ Views on Support for Family Caregiving*, May 2023. Available at https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/ltc/2023/voters-views-caregiving-support-report.doi.10.26419-2Fres.00616.001.pdf.

administrators and others -- who strive daily not only to meet the support and medical needs of a complex population of older adults, but also curate a high quality of life.

For these reasons, we urge you to **vote against H.R. 7513**, which again would **not** protect residents or staff – but which would allow owners and operators who wish to slash staffing levels to do so at the expense of patients and taxpayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max Richtman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Max Richtman
President and CEO