

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

May 7, 2024

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), I write to express our opposition to legislation modeled after H.R. 8244, “Ensuring Seniors’ Access to Quality Care Act.” Despite its name, this bill takes the wrong approach to improving and expanding the long-term care workforce.

H.R. 8224 would repeal provisions of the law that bar the poorest performing facilities from training nurse aides. Facilities that have demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance should not be allowed to train nursing staff. Such facilities with demonstrated gaps in care do not have the skills needed to launch people in this field successfully. Such facilities are often models of what should not be done to care for vulnerable people in our health care system.

We appreciate that this bill has evolved. The most recent draft excludes facilities found to have violations that put residents in immediate jeopardy or actual harm. This is an improvement over the original bill language but not over existing law. We remain concerned that the bill allows facilities where potentially dangerous conditions, like falsifying records or not having a functioning fire suppression system, to train future workers. Such facilities are not models of quality control. In many cases, those violations may hide serious incidents of poor care detrimental to resident safety; in other cases, those violations could spell the difference between a hazard and a catastrophe.

Around the country, facilities struggle to hire and retain sufficient workers. Policies that increase compensation and improve working conditions are far more likely to succeed in growing the long-term care workforce. Additional federal resources for workforce training and career advancement are also critical. This legislation does nothing to address these fundamental concerns.

We urge you to oppose this bill when it is considered by the Ways & Means Committee.

Sincerely,



Jody Calemine
Director, Advocacy