

Date, 2024

Dear Chairman Guthrie and Ranking Member Eshoo:

The Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals (ASCIP) strongly urges you to **OPPOSE H.R. 468**. ASCIP is a not-for-profit incorporated association whose mission is to optimize the health and wellness of individuals with spinal cord injury or disorder (SCI/D) through advanced interdisciplinary education, professional development and scientific research.

HR 468 weakens training requirements for nursing home staff, jeopardizing the safety and well-being of 1.2 million residents – many with complex needs like spinal cord injuries. We understand staffing challenges, but sacrificing training isn't the answer.

Imagine your loved ones with paralysis that are unable to manage their own basic needs. H.R. 468 puts such individuals at risk by allowing untrained staff to perform critical tasks. Proper care for these vulnerable residents requires specialized skills, not shortcuts. Weakening training standards is a recipe for disaster.

The Evidence is Clear. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) implemented a similar waiver during the pandemic. The results were devastating, with reports of **increased abuse, weight loss, depression, and pressure ulcers.**

- **Abuse:** Residents are particularly vulnerable to neglect and mistreatment without qualified caregivers.
- **Deteriorating Health:** Improper transfers, position changes, and hygiene practices can lead to pressure ulcers, weight loss, and depression.
- **Unskilled Care:** Basic resident rights, communication, and personal care skills are crucial for dignity and well-being. H.R. 468 allows workers to bypass training on these essential areas.

We cannot afford to repeat this mistake.

Investing in Solutions, Not Shortcuts: H.R. 468 proposes counting work hours towards training. This doesn't equip staff with the knowledge and skills they need. Let's focus on real solutions:

- **Increase wages and benefits:** Attract and retain qualified staff by making nursing home jobs competitive.
- **Enhance training programs:** Provide comprehensive training that addresses resident needs and specialized conditions.
- **Offer career advancement opportunities:** Motivate staff to stay and grow within the profession.

Stand Up for Our Most Vulnerable:

Our most vulnerable deserve better. H.R. 468 puts them at risk. Let's invest in quality care, not gamble with their safety.

We urge you to **oppose H.R. 468.**

Sincerely,