



June 23, 2011

The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Linda T. Sanchez
United States House of Representatives
1222 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: American Geriatrics Society Endorsement of the Direct Care Job Quality Improvement Act of 2011 (S. 1273/
H.R. 2341)**

Dear Senator Casey and Congresswoman Sanchez:

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) supports your legislation, the Direct Care Job Quality Improvement Act of 2011, which addresses several issues affecting direct care workers today. AGS is a national non-profit organization comprised of 6,000 health professionals, including physicians, nurses, researchers, medical educators, pharmacists, physician assistants, social workers, health care administrators, and others who specialize in geriatrics. We are the nation's largest multi-disciplinary health professional organization dedicated to improving the health, independence and quality of life of older people through initiatives in clinical practice, research and professional and public education.

As you know, direct care workers are important members of the geriatrics health care team. Since they provide the bulk of hands-on care to older adults, direct care workers are key in ensuring that older adults, especially those with multiple health conditions, receive high quality well-coordinated care. Your legislation will help create a stable and skilled direct care workforce and improve the quality of care for millions of elderly Americans. Amending the Fair Labor Standards Act to extend Federal minimum wage and overtime compensation protections to home care workers will help guarantee that these frontline health workers receive fair compensation for the services they provide.

AGS also supports the legislation's aim to establish a grant program to help states improve direct care worker recruitment, retention, and training. These programs have the ability to meet the nation's long-term care challenges, providing daily and personal care services to more than 13 million elderly and disabled Americans. Additionally, the provision to establish data collection and reporting requirements to monitor important workforce indicators such as size, compensation levels, turnover rates and vacancies will facilitate the sharing of such data among states, including tracking of best practices, ultimately, making this bill an important component of patient-centered care.

Senator Casey and Congresswoman Sanchez, AGS appreciates your leadership on this important legislation and your efforts to improve the quality of care for older Americans. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to enact the Direct Care Job Quality Improvement Act of 2011. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Alanna Goldstein, Assistant Director of Public Affairs and Advocacy, at agoldstein@americangeriatrics.org or 212-308-1414.

Sincerely,

Barbara Resnick, PhD, CRNP
President

Jennie Chin Hansen, RN, MS, FAAN
Chief Executive Office