



November 29, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell and Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of LeadingAge, a national organization representing more than 5,000 nonprofit aging services providers and other mission-minded organizations that touch millions of lives every day, we strongly urge you to support a year-end legislative package that includes immigration reform legislation to help stabilize the aging services workforce.

It is important to recognize long-term care in this country is at a crisis point. We can all agree that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated an already challenging staffing crisis in aging services. Even though we are entering a new and different phase of the pandemic, the aging services workforce situation is not improving. In fact, aging services professionals are struggling to recruit workers, and workers are being drawn away by higher wages and more flexible hours in other sectors. Experts believe staffing shortages and stress on an already burdened health-care system is expected to get worse in the coming months. Nationwide, the population of the United States is rapidly aging; by 2034 there will be more people over age 65 than under 18. Unfortunately, many who will need professional aging services at some point in their lives will be unable to obtain care.

While we will seek transformative changes in the 118th Congress to address the aging services workforce crisis by creating a sustainable domestic workforce pipeline, there are balanced immigration reform policies that could be enacted this year that can help to bring immediate relief to older adults and the aging services workforce. We urge you to include the following proposals in the final year-end legislative package that would help to ensure aging services providers can meet the needs of older adults who are currently and imminently in need of services:

- The *Citizenship for Essential Workers Act* (S. 747, H.R. 1909), that would create a pathway to citizenship and permanent residency status for aging services workers deemed “essential” during the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- The *Health Care Workforce Resilience Act* (S. 1024, H.R. 2255), that would recapture unused employment-based immigrant visas and make them available to 40,000 foreign nurses and doctors.
- The *Workforce for an Expanding Economy Act* (H.R. 4288) and the *Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act* (H.R. 7239), that would create a new visa system and allow

employers to legally hire non-agricultural essential workers, that have remained open for significant time. These visas would be available for aging services and other industries who currently have no visa program that allows them to legally hire year-round temporary workers.

We also encourage you to consider implementing a new temporary guest worker H-2 Visa Program for aging services and organizations serving people with disabilities, as recommended in a draft bill supported by LeadingAge, the *Ensuring Caregivers for the Aged and Disabled Act*.

Furthermore, we urge Congress to work together to find a compromise to address the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and those with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) that would provide a path for hundreds of thousands to remain in the United States. Failure to address DACA, TPS and other essential workers will continue to cause turmoil for the more than 10 million immigrants in an unstable status that are living and working in the United States to earn legal status.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smith Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Smith Sloan
President and CEO

Cc: Chair and Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee and the Subcommittee on Security and Immigration
Chair and Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee and the Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship