



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

STRENGTHENING THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK

Leadership in Research, Career Advancement, and Education

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November 19, 2010

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

Dear Senator Casey:

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) thanks you for introducing the *Direct Care Workforce Empowerment Act* – a long-awaited solution to many of the problems facing direct care workers. CSWE is proud to endorse this bill, as social workers and direct care workers are closely aligned in their efforts to bring care and services to those most in need. CSWE is a nonprofit national association representing more than 3,000 individual members as well as over 650 graduate and undergraduate programs of professional social work education. In addition to its education mission, CSWE is dedicated to promoting and enhancing social work research, helping social work educators and practitioners meet the needs of vulnerable populations through evidence-based practice.

Direct care workers are fundamental to the health, autonomy and well-being of more than 13 million Americans today and more than 27 million who will depend on their care and services by 2050. But too often, we see poor working conditions lead to high turnover in this workforce, jeopardizing the quality of care provided to those who need it most. The *Direct Care Workforce Empowerment Act* extends wage and overtime protections to home care workers, who have been repeatedly denied justice under the *Fair Labor Standards Act*; strengthens data collection and workforce monitoring; and improves direct care workforce recruitment and retention by providing grants to states.

Thank you for your efforts to help create a more stable, valued direct care workforce and improve the quality of care for millions of Americans. We appreciate your commitment to improving the long-term care system in this country and look forward to continuing to work with your office in support of the *Direct Care Workforce Empowerment Act* in the 112th Congress. Please contact Wendy Naus at wendy@lewis-burke.com or (202) 289-7475 with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Julia M. Watkins'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia M. Watkins, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Council on Social Work Education

Cc: David Ward, Direct Care Alliance