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,