

NCCNHR National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform

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1975-2005: Working Together for Quality Long-Term Care

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November 10, 2005

The Honorable John Larson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Larson:

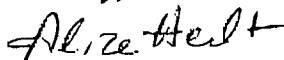
The National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform is pleased to support the Nursing Home Fire Safety Act of 2005.

NCCNHR and its members were deeply saddened by the deaths of more than 30 residents in nursing home fires in Hartford and Nashville in 2003. These tragic, unnecessary deaths were a stark reminder that after more than 30 years of debate, the federal government still does not require all nursing homes to have automatic sprinklers as a condition of participating in Medicare and Medicaid. If the estimated 3,500 nursing facilities that do not have sprinklers to suppress fires do not install them, fire officials assure us that tragedies such as those in Hartford and Nashville will be repeated.

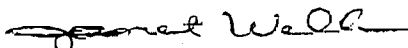
The Nursing Home Fire Safety Act will provide financial assistance to ensure that cost is no longer a factor in nursing homes' decision whether or not to install the only certain defense against fatal fires. NCCNHR hopes that the legislation will also expedite the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' adoption and timely implementation of the 2005 Life Safety Code requirement for sprinklers in all nursing facilities.

NCCNHR and its members thank you for introducing this life-saving legislation.

Sincerely,



Alice H. Hedt
Executive Director



Janet C. Wells
Director of Public Policy