



November 17, 2005

The Honorable John B. Larson
1005 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Congressman Larson:

On behalf of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA), I want you to know of our strong support for the Nursing Home Fire Safety Act that you plan to introduce. AAHSA members serve two million people every day through mission-driven, not-for-profit organizations dedicated to providing the services people need, when they need them, in the place they call home. Our members offer the continuum of aging services: home and community based programs, adult day programs, continuing care retirement communities, nursing homes, assisted living, and senior housing. AAHSA's commitment is to create the future of aging services through quality people can trust.

We absolutely agree with you on the need for effective fire prevention in nursing homes through the installation of automatic sprinkling systems. The cost of retrofitting older buildings has been a barrier, however, given the tight financial circumstances under which most nursing homes operate.

Your bill would provide the resources necessary to overcome this barrier by authorizing loans and hardship grants to finance the installation of automatic sprinkler systems. The bill also would set a reasonable timetable for all nursing homes to have these systems installed, in compliance with the 2006 Life Safety Code of the National Fire Protection Association.

We greatly appreciate the leadership you have shown on this issue. Once the legislation is introduced, we will ask our members to urge their legislators to cosponsor the bill, and we will be happy to do any other form of advocacy on it that you feel would be helpful.

Sincerely,



William L. Minnix, Jr.
President and CEO