



February 15, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Senator Collins and Senator Casey:

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), I write to express NASW's support for the Geriatrics Workforce Improvement Act (S. 299) and to thank you for reintroducing this important bill.

As the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the country, NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its 120,000 members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies. Integral to that mission is advocacy both for older adults and for the social workers who serve older adults. Your legislation addresses both.

NASW has long maintained that coordinated, team-based care improves health outcomes for older adults. The Geriatrics Workforce Improvement Act promotes such care by supporting two critical objectives:

- The bill establishes formal funding for the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) at the \$45 million level. Community-based organizations (many of which provide social work services) and schools of social work are among the entities eligible to participate in GWEP partnerships. Moreover, social workers are among the professionals eligible for interdisciplinary training through GWEP.
- The bill reestablishes the Geriatric Academic Career Awards (GACA), a previously funded program for developing academic clinical educators specializing in aging, at the \$6 million level. Clinical social workers are among the professionals eligible for GACA.

As you know, GWEP is the only federal program dedicated to developing a health care workforce that maximizes the engagement of older adults and family caregivers while improving health outcomes. Realizing these objectives is essential to ensuring that all of us have access to high-quality health care as we age.

NASW is pleased to collaborate with you in advocating for passage of the Geriatrics Workforce Improvement Act. In addition to joint advocacy with the Eldercare Workforce Alliance, NASW is mobilizing its 100,000 Legislative

Advocacy Network to urge their Congressional representatives to support S. 299. We will forward a link to that advocacy alert when it becomes available.

Thank you, again, for your leadership in strengthening the health care workforce and enhancing the health of older adults.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angelo McClain". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Angelo McClain, PhD, LICSW
Chief Executive Officer