



September 20, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the 57 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC), we urge you to consider and pass H.R. 618, the *Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act*, as soon as possible. This bill would retire outdated barriers in the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) that limit the ability of nurse practitioners (NPs) to diagnose and oversee the care and treatment of federal employees who are injured or become ill in the course of their employment. The NCC is a cross section of education, practice, research, and regulation within the nursing profession representing Registered Nurses (RNs), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs),¹ nurse leaders, boards of nursing, students, faculty, and researchers. We appreciate your continued efforts to improve the health care system for our nation's federal employees and strongly support passage of this bipartisan effort.

Currently, federal employees can select an NP as their health care provider under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, and the majority of states authorize NPs to provide the diagnosis and treatment for a workplace related injury. However, contrary to the workers' compensation process in most states, FECA requires that only a physician can make the diagnosis, certify the injury and extent of the disability, and oversee the patient's treatment and care. This barrier places an additional burden on the over two million federal employees,² depriving them from receiving health care from their provider of choice, as well as hindering timely access to care and continuity of care.

The *Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act* would update the federal workers' compensation program and authorize NPs to certify disabilities and oversee treatment for injured or ill federal employees under FECA. This would improve access to health care for injured or ill federal employees, particularly in rural and underserved communities, and

¹ APRNs include certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) and nurse practitioners (NPs).

² Congressional Research Service. "Current Federal Civilian Employment by State and Congressional District." September 22, 2023. Retrieved from: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47716>.

align the federal workers' compensation program with state law. By updating FECA to authorize federal employees to select their health care provider of choice when they are injured or become ill in the course of their federal employment, greater access, overall efficiency, and better continuity of care can be achieved.

H.R. 618 recently passed the House Committee on Education and the Workforce on June 13, 2024, with a bipartisan vote of 36-0.³ In addition to having broad, bipartisan support, the Congressional Budget Office also scored the bill as having no additional cost because it could get federal workers back to work quicker.⁴

Again, we urge you to consider and pass H.R. 618, the *Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act*, as soon as possible. Should you have any questions or if the Nursing Community Coalition can be of any additional assistance please contact the coalition's Executive Director, Rachel Minahan, at rstevenson@thenursingcommunity.org.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
Academy of Neonatal Nursing
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Heart Failure Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American Association of Neuroscience Nurses
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Nursing Informatics Association
American Organization for Nursing Leadership
American Public Health Association, Public Health Nursing Section
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nursing
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
Association of Public Health Nurses
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of Veterans Affairs Nurse Anesthetists
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

³ House Education and Workforce Committee, H.Rept.118-571- Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/118th-congress/house-report/571/1?outputFormat=pdf>.

⁴ Congressional Budget Office. Cost Estimate. June 18, 2024. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2024-06/hr618EdW.pdf>.

Dermatology Nurses' Association
Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Infusion Nurses Society
International Association of Forensic Nurses
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Black Nurses Association
National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers
National League for Nursing
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
Pediatric Endocrinology Nursing Society
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Society of Pediatric Nurses
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society

cc:

Chairwoman Virginia Foxx, House Education & the Workforce Committee
Ranking Member Bobby Scott, House Education & the Workforce Committee
House Majority Leader, Representative Steve Scalise
House Minority Whip, Representative Katherine Clark
Representative Tim Walberg
Representative Joe Courtney