

News from Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

Representing New York's 7th Congressional District • Brooklyn, Manhattan & Queens
Ranking Member, House Small Business Committee



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Velázquez Bill Would Create Job Opportunity for Public Housing Residents

Washington, DC – Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY) today unveiled legislation to provide public housing residents with training and certification needed to secure new jobs. The bill would help residents of public housing agencies, such as the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), to receive training in home healthcare and then assist them in securing employment with elderly or disabled individuals.

“This proposal meets the needs of our community in two ways,” Velázquez noted. “By training our neighbors in a high growth field, this legislation will create local economic opportunity and, simultaneously, it will help meet a burgeoning need for compassionate, skilled home healthcare workers.”

The “Together We Care Act”, H.R. 3467, establishes a three-year federal pilot training program specializing in home healthcare services. Public housing residents will be given the opportunity to receive home health services training from organizations certified by the state. Following certification, the newly trained aides would be matched with elderly or disabled individuals who are Medicaid-eligible. The legislation would provide the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with \$5 million per year to support the effort. Agencies like the New York City Housing Authority would be eligible to apply for grants to utilize locally.

“Home care is a profession that will be in high demand for years to come and this legislation will offer hard-working public housing residents with the tools they need to enter this field,” Velázquez added.

Due to demographic trends, the home healthcare profession is expected to grow rapidly. By 2030, one in five Americans will be age 65 or older, yet the number of family members available to provide care will only increase by 25 percent. To help seniors remain in comfortable, non-institutionalized settings, home care workers will be needed. Personal Care Aides and Home Health Aides are projected to be the fastest-growing occupations in the country between 2010 and 2020, increasing by 71 percent and 69 percent, respectively. In addition to helping older Americans live independently, home care is a cost-effective option for providing assistance to seniors. The expense of nursing home care is more than double that of providing home care for an individual.

“Without a sufficient workforce of home healthcare providers, many elderly individuals will need to enter expensive nursing homes, straining family and government budgets and placing seniors in a new, sometimes disorienting environment,” Velázquez noted. “By empowering public housing residents to work as caregivers in their local community, the legislation will help keep families together and strengthen bonds between neighbors.”

(MORE)

The “Together We Care Act” will be introduced today in the U.S. House of Representatives. It has been endorsed by a wide range of advocacy groups including: NYCHA; B’nai B’rith, Community Service Society of New York; Corporation for Supportive Housing; Enterprise Community Partners; Fifth Avenue Committee; Good Old Lower East Side; Leading Age; Legal Aid Society of New York; Local Initiatives Support Corporation; National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials; National Community Reinvestment Coalition; National Alliance to End Homelessness; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty; National Low Income Housing Coalition; NYU Lutheran Family Health Centers; the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities and the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute.

“Our strained long-term care system faces a number of issues including a workforce shortage, and seniors who need care in their homes where they prefer to age,” said Larry Minnix, President and CEO of LeadingAge. “As our elder struggle to remain in their communities this bill will go a long way towards a major challenge for residents. Congresswoman Velázquez is to be commended for her leadership on this important legislation.”

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