

From: EdLaborPress <EdLaborPress@mail.house.gov>
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Scott, Kaine Introduce Legislation to Support Direct Care Workers

WASHINGTON – Today, Committee on Education and Labor Chairman Bobby Scott (VA-03), Representative Susie Lee (NV-03), along with Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH), introduced legislation to invest in and support direct care workers. The [**Direct Creation, Advancement, and Retention of Employment \(CARE\) Opportunity Act**](#) (H.R. 4397) invests in training and employment advancement opportunities for America’s direct care workers.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than a million direct care workers will be needed by 2024. The *Direct CARE Opportunity Act* helps address this demand by strengthening support for workers who provide daily living assistance to millions of older Americans, people with disabilities, and others with chronic care needs.

“Direct care workers provide critical services to our nation’s seniors and individuals with disabilities,” said Chairman Bobby Scott, Committee on Education and Labor. “As one of the fastest growing occupational sectors in the country, we must make meaningful investments to ensure that this field attracts talented professionals and provides advancement opportunities for those dedicated to the profession. The Direct CARE Opportunity Act will achieve this by funding and promoting innovative strategies to recruit, retain, and support our nation’s direct care workers. This bill will also ensure that seniors and individuals with disabilities have access to the care they need to age in place with dignity.”

“Millions of older Americans, especially those with disabilities and chronic care needs, rely on direct care workers to live securely and with dignity,” said Representative Susie Lee. “Right now, there are

simply not enough direct care workers to meet this demand. The population of older Americans is skyrocketing, and it's estimated that we will need an additional 5.2 million direct care workers by 2024. This bill will help meet that demand by directly investing in the recruitment and training of our direct care workforce pipeline. The Direct CARE Opportunity Act strengthens the Older Americans Act and is a practical, bipartisan piece of legislation that will help ensure our seniors can live independently and with dignity."

"Our population is aging, and there's a growing demand for care. Direct care workers provide critical assistance to older Americans, people with disabilities, and others with chronic conditions. We need to do what we can to support their important work – including recruiting and retaining care workers but also providing opportunities for their advancement. Our bill will help ensure their work is valued as highly as it should be and that they have the resources needed to effectively do their jobs," **said Senator Kaine, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.**

"Direct care workers provide invaluable support to seniors and people experiencing disabilities – but in New Hampshire and across the country, there are not enough people to fill these critical roles," **said Senator Maggie Hassan.** *"This bill not only helps to close this workforce gap, but will also directly benefit the direct care workers by investing in training as well as career advancement."*

The *Direct CARE Opportunity Act* addresses the need for a well-trained direct care workforce by:

- Providing funding to fifteen entities to invest in strategies to recruit, retain and advance the direct care workforce pipeline;
- Implementing models and strategies to make the field of direct care more attractive, such as training, providing career pathways, mentoring, and allowing for local and regional innovation to address workforce shortages in a high-demand field;
- Encouraging retention and career advancement in the growing field of direct care; and
- Responding to the needs of a growing aging population and allowing older Americans, people with disabilities, and others who require direct care services to remain in their communities, when possible.

The *Direct CARE Opportunity Act* is endorsed by: the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFLCIO (AFSCME), the Arc, Association of University Centers of Disabilities (AUCD), National Association of Council on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), National Employment Law Project (NELP), PHI, and Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

To read the fact sheet on the *Direct CARE Opportunity Act*, click [here](#).

To read the bill text for the *Direct CARE Opportunity Act*, click [here](#).

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