



H.R. 9641, Essential Caregivers Act

Rep. Tenney (R-NY), Rep. Larson (D-CT)

Background:

- **1.2 million Americans** live in the **more than 15,000 nursing homes** across the U.S.
- **38 million Americans** are caregivers to adult family members, including nursing home residents.
 - **83% of care for older adults** comes from family members, friends, and other caregivers.
 - Caregivers spend **37 hours per month** helping their loved ones in nursing homes.
- **60% of nursing home residents** experience loneliness.
 - Isolation and loneliness are associated with a **50% higher risk of dementia**, a **32% higher risk of stroke**, and a nearly **4x risk of death** among heart failure patients.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, **some state governments** like New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and California **imposed excessively restrictive visitation limitations on nursing homes and other facilities**, even for caregivers and family members.
 - **76% of nursing home residents** reported feeling lonelier under these pandemic restrictions.
 - Multiple studies find that visitation bans had a negligible impact on COVID-19 infection rates in nursing homes.
 - **Many of these states mandated** that nursing homes accept COVID-19 patients discharged from hospitals, **directly contradicting caregiver visitation bans**.

H.R. 9641, *Essential Caregivers Act*

- **Protects patients by requiring nursing homes and other similar care facilities** to allow residents to **designate an essential caregiver** who can enter the facility **and care for the resident** even in times of an emergency when regular visitation is suspended.
- **Imposes fines** on nursing homes and other facilities that fail to allow essential caregiver visitation.