



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1783

Resolution calling upon the New York State Senate to pass S.598B and for the Governor to sign S.598B/A.3922A, which would enact the "reimagining long-term care task force act" to create a task force to study the state of long-term care services in New York.

By Council Members Chin and Louis

Whereas, As reported by the National Institute on Aging, long-term care includes a variety of services developed to meet an individual's health or personal care needs, and these services can be provided in different settings including in facilities, such as nursing homes or adult day care centers, as well as within an individual's home; and

Whereas, On March 1, 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in New York State (NYS), and within weeks of the first reported case, long-term care facilities became an epicenter of the outbreak; and

Whereas, On July 23, 2020, the New York Times reported that NYS ranked second in the nation among states with the highest number of known deaths in long-term care facilities and about 21 percent of all statewide COVID-19 related deaths occurred in a nursing home or long-term care facility; and

Whereas, While nursing home residents' older age and compromised health make them more at risk to contract serious cases of COVID-19, many advocates contend that certain governmental policies such as a former NYS health directive which required nursing homes to accept patients with COVID-19 from the hospital, contributed to massive COVID-19 outbreaks in these facilities; and

Whereas, While the spread of the virus has been contained with the state having a COVID-19 infection rate below one percent for over one month, as reported by the Office of the Governor, there were a significant number of COVID-19 related deaths in NYS nursing homes, and as of September 17, 2020 there were 1,410

COVID-19 confirmed deaths in NYC nursing homes, according to the New York State Department of Health; and

Whereas, The significant loss of nursing home residents was just one of many challenges nursing home residents endured throughout this pandemic, as a New York Times Article reported that some nursing home facilities were evicting vulnerable patients to enroll more “profitable” patients with coronavirus; and

Whereas, While nursing homes are now able to accept visitations if the facility is free from COVID-19 for at least 14 days, during the onset of the pandemic, many residents went months without seeing their loved ones despite massive pleading from their families; and

Whereas, Nursing homes represent a small number of older adults receiving long-term care, and the American Association of Retired Persons reports that 90 percent of individuals receiving long-term care services live at home or in a community environment; and

Whereas, Home care workers also faced a plethora of issues throughout the pandemic, and according to a Home Care Association of New York State (HCA-NYS) survey, most home-based providers didn’t have access to sufficient personal protective equipment during the pandemic; and

Whereas, Almost 50 percent of the agencies participating in HCA-NYS survey indicated that they experienced patients or family members not allowing home care personnel to enter their homes during the pandemic; and

Whereas, A survey conducted by Accent Care Services, which employs home health aides in New York State, reveals that more than 2,700 home health aides had to quarantine due to possible exposure to COVID-19, more than 780 home health aides contracted COVID-19, and 33 home health aides experienced COVID-19 related deaths, as reported by AMNY; and

Whereas, The issues in NYS’s long-term care services is not unique to the pandemic or the state, and in fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that before the COVID-19 pandemic there were longstanding problems in long-term care systems throughout the world including underfunding, a lack of

accountability and an undervalued workforce; and

Whereas, In New York State, for example, home health aides average hourly wage is \$12.62, according to May 2018 data released by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Brookings Institution, reports that nursing assistants, phlebotomists, home health aides, housekeepers, medical assistants, cooks and many other long-term care personnel median wage is \$12.48 per hour; and

Whereas, the WHO reports that the response for long-term care will be one of the most essential and imperative steps in addressing the impact of COVID-19 in many nations; and

Whereas, While the WHO, and many other organizations developed recommendations to make long-term care services more effective, NYS would benefit from state specific policy recommendations on how it could improve long-term care services; and

Whereas, On February 22, 2021, the Senate passed S.958A, sponsored by Senator Rachel May, which would create a task force to examine the state of long-term care and the limitations that negatively affect the quality of care of these services, and this taskforce would be charged with examining COVID-19 specific challenges and long-standing issues that made long-term care systems vulnerable to outbreaks during the pandemic; and

Whereas, on March 3, 2021, the New York State Assembly amended and passed A3922A, sponsored by Assembly member Catalina Cruz, but S.598B, has not been passed by the Senate; and

Whereas, The adoption of S.598B and A.3922A, which includes amendments to provide culturally and linguistically relevant healthcare, would help improve long-term care services provided to some of the most vulnerable residents across New York State and would serve as an initial step to protecting them from future outbreaks; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Senate to pass S.598B and for the Governor to sign S.598B/A.3922A, which would enact the "reimagining long-term care task force act" to create a task force to study the state of long-term care services in New York

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