

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 5, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris  
Vice President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris:

Congratulations on your inauguration. We are inspired by your bold American Rescue Plan to defeat the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic and your Build Back Better Jobs and Recovery plan to bolster our fragile economy. Your vision includes a long overdue investment in the caregiving economy—to build a durable and robust workforce, to advance racial and gender equity and to make it possible for older adults and people with disabilities to receive long-term services and supports in their homes and communities. We strongly support this investment and stand ready to help your Administration make it a reality.

Economists and workers know that now, and in the coming decades, our fellow Americans will need a stable, reliable and well-supported workforce to care for many of our relatives, friends and neighbors. During your campaign, you laid out a plan to invest \$450 billion in Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS). Your proposal recognizes the needs of children with complex medical needs, youth and adults with disabilities as well as aging adults.

As a critical component of your Build Back Better Plan, this investment in HCBS would create a robust caregiving system, while also driving sustainable economic growth and meeting the health care needs of our Nation's rapidly aging population. It would help propel the country's economy out of the pandemic-induced recession by increasing employment and enabling those receiving services to participate in their communities. It would transform low-paid caregiving jobs into family-sustaining occupations with higher wages, benefits and the opportunity to join a union. These outcomes would also advance racial and gender equity given that the caregiving profession is disproportionately supported by Black women, other women of color and immigrants. Finally, such an investment would support people with disabilities, older adults and

family caregivers with the supports they need to live the lives they wish to lead.

The challenges facing our Nation’s long-term care system predated this pandemic, which has only exacerbated its many flaws. An essential HCBS workforce supports millions of older adults and people with disabilities to live in their own homes and communities, but many of these workers struggle to support themselves and their families financially. Even worse, too many of these workers have been without basic personal protective equipment, timely COVID-19 testing and enforceable safety standards as the pandemic ravages our Nation. Your caregiving economic plan will provide direct support workers with the compensation and essential benefits they deserve. By strengthening the workforce, your plan also will provide the reliable supports needed by people with disabilities and older adults who wish to remain in their homes and communities.

At the outset of your Administration, we have the opportunity to rescue a teetering caregiving system and recreate it to transform the lives of millions of workers and to serve as an economic workhorse. For many years, both political parties have failed to value and affirm the caregiving workforce that provides essential care for older Americans, children and people with disabilities. We must seize this opportunity, as we have an imperative to respond to the devastation this pandemic has wrought, with a forward-looking plan to reshape our long-term care system.

We have an obligation to act on behalf of those heroes on the front lines who risked their lives to care for our loved ones. We in the federal government also must take decisive action to honor the workers, older adults and people with disabilities who have lost their lives to this pandemic. Your plan to invest in a caregiving economy is a plan to invest in America and its people. We look forward to working with you to make these goals a reality.

Sincerely,

/s/

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Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

/s/

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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

/s/

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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

/s/

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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

/s/

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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

/s/

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Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

/s/

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Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator

/s/

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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

/s/

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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

/s/

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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

/s/

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Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

/s/

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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

/s/

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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

/s/

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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

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Tina Smith  
United States Senator

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Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

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Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator

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Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

/s/

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Jack Reed  
United States Senator

/s/

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Jeffery A. Merkely  
United States Senator

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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator

/s/

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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

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Alex Padilla  
United States Senator

/s/

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Ben Ray Luján  
United States Senator

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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

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Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator