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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. _____

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Congress should enact the Older Americans Bill of Rights to establish that older Americans should have the right to live with dignity and with independence.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Congress should enact the Older Americans Bill of Rights to establish that older Americans should have the right to live with dignity and with independence.

Whereas the percentage of the United States population that is 65 years of age and older, including the percentage of aging veterans, is rapidly expanding, with 10,000 Americans turning age 65 every day;

Whereas Federal policies are needed that promote economic well-being and quality of life for older Americans across many different communities, recognizing race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, cultural diver-

sity, and the growing inequality between poor and wealthy families;

Whereas Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act of 1965 provide critical resources to aging Americans and their families but should be expanded and improved to meet growing needs;

Whereas prescription drug prices in the United States are more than 4 times higher on average than in other peer nations, a burden that disproportionately falls on older Americans, as almost 90 percent of adults 65 or older take a prescription drug;

Whereas aging Americans deserve a dignified, secure, and independent retirement, but nearly half of all Americans 55 and older have no retirement benefits or savings;

Whereas aging women (the majority of those over 65) live longer on average, are more likely to live in poverty, earn lower Social Security benefits, and are less likely to have pensions because of paycheck disparities, time spent out of the workforce for family caregiving responsibilities, and a greater chance of having worked low-wage jobs;

Whereas older Americans in rural, low-income, minority, Indian country, and other underserved communities may be especially vulnerable because of a lack of access to needed and affordable services that allow them to remain in their communities, including adequate transportation, functioning technology, and protected voting rights;

Whereas 5,900,00 older Americans lived in poverty in 2022; 6,900,000 seniors aged 60 and older Americans were food insecure in 2022; 138,000 older Americans over the age of 55 experienced homelessness in 2023, and more

than 1 in 3 Americans between 50-80 years are socially isolated;

Whereas many older Americans are living longer, working longer, and enjoying healthier, more active lifestyles than past generations, while others are facing shorter lifespans and increased physical, mental, and psychological challenges;

Whereas age-friendly movements are gaining momentum across the country in communities, health systems, and public health initiatives but are not yet fully aligned and coordinated to ensure maximum results;

Whereas 70 percent of those reaching age 65 will require long-term services and supports and will need to rely on family, friends, or paid caregivers;

Whereas by 2035 it is estimated that 1 in 3 households will be headed by someone aged 65 or older, but many older Americans face challenges in obtaining or keeping affordable, safe, and accessible housing;

Whereas nearly 6,000,000 children live in grandparent-headed households, and almost 3,000,000 are being raised by their grandparents.

Whereas approximately 75 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who need a hearing aid do not have one; 70 percent of beneficiaries who have trouble eating because of their teeth did not go to the dentist in the past year; and 43 percent of beneficiaries who have trouble seeing did not have an eye exam in the past year;

Whereas older Americans are increasingly the victims of fraud, scams, exploitation, identity theft, and even physical and financial abuse, that threaten their dignity, security, and health; and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately burdened older Americans, resulting in over 850,000 deaths as of May 2023, millions of cases, and increased distress in adults aged 65 and older, especially those in congregate living facilities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that the Congress should enact the Older
3 Americans Bill of Rights to establish that older Americans
4 should have the right to live with dignity and with inde-
5 pendence, including the right to—

6 (1) high-quality and affordable health care and
7 long-term services and supports through—

8 (A) guaranteed access to equitable, com-
9 prehensive, geographically available, timely,
10 safe, and dignified health care;

11 (B) preserved, improved, and expanded
12 Medicare and Medicaid benefits;

13 (C) lower prescription drug prices and in-
14 creased drug price transparency;

15 (D) mechanisms to allow aging in place,
16 including support for family and nonfamily
17 caregivers, and expansion of the direct care
18 workforce;

19 (E) protection against neglect, abandon-
20 ment, and domestic abuse;

1 (F) culturally and linguistically competent
2 health care and social services;

3 (G) health-promoting public health policies
4 and programs;

5 (H) higher standards for skilled nursing
6 facilities;

7 (I) increased access to palliative care; and

8 (J) increased access to nutritional service.

9 (2) financial and retirement security for them-
10 selves and their families, through—

11 (A) preserved, improved, and expanded So-
12 cial Security benefits;

13 (B) protection for pensions as earned bene-
14 fits;

15 (C) assistance in establishing retirement
16 savings;

17 (D) protection against financial exploi-
18 tation, abuse, scams, and digital identity theft;
19 and

20 (E) job training, volunteer opportunities,
21 and enforcement of age discrimination in em-
22 ployment prohibitions.

23 (3) full participation in and contribution to
24 their communities, through—

1 (A) accessible and affordable housing and
2 transportation;

3 (B) equitable access to technology, includ-
4 ing expanded broadband speed, affordability,
5 and accessibility;

6 (C) social networking and other opportuni-
7 ties for digital engagement;

8 (D) the right to vote and improved polling
9 location accessibility; and

10 (E) culturally and linguistically competent
11 and comprehensive home and community-based
12 services.