February 8, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security  
379A Senate Russell Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security  
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander, Chairman Enzi, Ranking Member Murray, and Ranking Member Sanders,

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), we look forward to working with you and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) in the 115th Congress. As you and your colleagues address our nation’s most pressing priorities, please know that our association stands ready to serve as a resource to you and the committee. As the national voice for academic nursing, AACN’s membership is comprised of 800 schools of nursing with baccalaureate and graduate programs. Our member schools educate over 457,000 nursing students and prepare many of the profession’s finest leaders who are working to improve America’s health through advancements in education, research, and clinical practice.

Since the association was established in 1969, AACN has fostered collaborative relationships with other nursing organizations, the broader healthcare and higher education communities, Congress, and the Administration. Through these partnerships, we have helped improve and advance policies that establish the critical role nurses play in delivering high quality, cost-effective, team-based health care. During this Congress, AACN stands ready to work with you and your staff on issues related to improving the healthcare and higher education for our nation.

Inter-professionalism, sustainability, innovation, collaboration, equity, and inclusiveness are the core policy values highlighted in AACN’s 2017-2018 Federal Policy Agenda. We believe these principles are necessary to strengthen and advance the current healthcare delivery system and higher education. As the committee explores public health, nursing workforce, the future direction of healthcare and biomedical research, and higher education policy in America, AACN stands ready to serve as an expert voice on baccalaureate and graduate nursing education as they relate to the work of the committee. Furthermore, as the Committee takes up relevant legislation (e.g., Title VIII and higher education reauthorization), we request that you consider the following:

**Workforce**
Meeting the supply and demand of nursing services has been a cornerstone of our work with Congress and the Administration. We firmly believe that increased access to healthcare cannot be fully realized if the workforce is not developed to meet rising demand. At the same time, we believe that a highly educated nursing workforce and quality education directly translates to quality care. To meet this

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One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 530 ∙ Washington, DC 20036 ∙ 202-463-6930 tel ∙ 202-785-8320 fax ∙ www.aacn.nche.edu
endeavor, we encourage the committee to take up the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act during this Congress when it is reintroduced. This legislation will ensure that the Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act) are sustained and continue to support nursing students across the country, with the ultimate goal of ensuring access to nursing care in regions in most need. We have a wealth of expertise on the impact of Title VIII and other programs that our students also participate in, including the National Health Service Corps, and part of the Title VII programs.

**Research**
AACN member schools employ and groom the next generation of nurse scientists. The committee’s interest in bolstering healthcare and biomedical research, as evidenced by its bipartisan work to pass the 21st Century Cures Act during the 114th Congress, is a prime issue that AACN supported as it impacts the ability for nurse researchers to produce innovations and translate them to the public. Additionally, the nurse researchers whose work is supported by federal research entities such as the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality aim to improve patient quality of life and reduce financial burden. We would be honored to provide examples of this return on investment.

**Higher Education**
AACN supports our students’ and institutions’ ability to thrive through higher education policies that improve affordability, diversity/inclusion, transparency, and reduce regulatory burden.

If AACN can be of service, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Suzanne Miyamoto, Chief Policy Officer, at Smiyamoto@aacn.nche.edu or Lauren Inouye, Director of Government Affairs, at Linouye@aacn.nche.edu.

Sincerely,

Juliann G. Sebastian, PhD, RN, FAAN
Board Chair

Deborah E. Trautman, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and Chief Executive Officer