



January 19, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representative
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representative
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman DeLauro, Vice Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Member Granger:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed nursing schools, faculty, and students on the frontlines supporting local communities and preparing the next generation of nurse leaders and scientists. Now, more than ever, we must invest in nursing education, research, and the workforce to ensure that the nation is prepared to address current and future healthcare challenges. To maximize certainty in uncertain times, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) urges Congress to avoid a long-term continuing resolution and support the following fiscal year (FY) 2022 funding requests as outlined in the House-passed minibus appropriation bill:

- **At least \$314.472 million for Nursing Workforce Development programs** (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.]),¹ and
- **At least \$200.782 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR, National Institutes of Health)** from within the overall NIH funding level.²

As the national voice for academic nursing, AACN represents nearly 840 schools of nursing at private and public universities, who educate more than 580,000 students and employ more than 52,000 faculty. Collectively, these institutions graduate registered nurses (RN), advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), educators, researchers, and frontline providers. Our member schools are committed to preparing a highly educated nursing workforce and strengthening the foundation of nursing science, not only as we confront existing health challenges, but as we provide tomorrow's equitable and innovative healthcare solutions.

¹ H.R. 4502, The Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Agriculture, Rural Development, Energy and Water Development, Financial Services and General Government, Interior, Environment, Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act, 2022. Page 51. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4502> and the House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education FY 2022 Committee Report. Page 54. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/117/crpt/hrpt96/CRPT-117hrpt96.pdf>

² H.R. 4502, The Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Agriculture, Rural Development, Energy and Water Development, Financial Services and General Government, Interior, Environment, Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act, 2022. Page 69. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4502> and the House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education FY 2022 Committee Report. Page 134. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/117/crpt/hrpt96/CRPT-117hrpt96.pdf>

A well-educated nursing workforce is essential, which has been abundantly clear in our ongoing efforts to combat COVID-19. For over fifty years, Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs have consistently and continually built the supply and distribution of highly educated nurses by strengthening nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through graduate study. Through grants, scholarships, and loan repayments programs, these vital federal investments positively impact the profession's ability to serve America's patients across the country, especially those most in need; bolster diversity within the workforce; and increase the number of nurses trained to serve in a variety of capacities, including at the forefront of public health emergencies and caring for our aging population.

AACN also recognizes that scientific research and discovery is the foundation on which nursing practice is built and is essential to advancing evidence-based interventions, informing policy, closing gaps in healthcare disparities, and sustaining the health of the nation. As one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at NIH, the NINR is an integral part to improving care and is on the cutting edge of new innovations that impact how nurses are educated and how they practice.

From the classroom to the frontlines, nurses and nursing students are integral members of the healthcare team. Historic support for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs and NINR is essential. Therefore, AACN respectfully requests **at least \$314.472 million for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs and \$200.782 million for NINR** as outlined in the House-passed minibuss appropriations bill in FY 2022. Furthermore, as Congress explores supplemental funding to address the Omicron variant and future coronavirus variants, we urge you to consider additional funding to protect the vital nursing workforce and pipeline. If AACN can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact AACN's Director of Government Affairs, Rachel Stevenson, at (202) 463-6930, ext. 271 or rstenenson@aacnnursing.org.

Sincerely,



Susan Bakewell-Sachs, PhD, RN, FAAN
Board Chair



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

CC:

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer
Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell