



AFSCME

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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April 3, 1998

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The Honorable John D. Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of the 1.3 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I want to thank you for your leadership in developing the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998. We greatly appreciate your decision to include protections for health care professionals who raise quality concerns. An agreement in this critical area would not have been possible without the efforts of you and your staff.

As you know, many nurses, doctors and other health care workers are unwilling to raise quality concerns because of fear of reprisals. This has been a major problem for AFSCME members, many of whom have lost their jobs, seen their hours cut back, or had their shifts changed because they spoke out about threats to patient safety. The Patients' Bill of Rights includes meaningful protections that will allow health care professionals to report quality problems to their employers, public agencies, and private accreditation entities. This will encourage health care professionals to step forward and will lead to major improvements in the quality of care that patients receive.

Again, I want to thank you personally and on behalf of our entire union for your commitment to protecting the rights of patients and health care workers. We look forward to working with you to win enactment of the Patients' Bill of Rights.

Sincerely,

Gerald W. McEntee
International President

GWMcE:chd

cc: Flora Walker, International Vice President

in the public service