

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

August 17, 2004

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. General Accounting Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

We are writing to request that GAO study the problem of sex offenders living in nursing homes and prisoners paroled to nursing homes.

In recent months, we have read disturbing news accounts about these dangerous individuals being housed with frail senior citizens in nursing homes, in some cases resulting in physical and sexual abuse.¹ Often, family members, nursing home staff, and state departments of health are not even aware that these placements of sex offenders and prisoners are occurring.

Given the large amount of federal funds that nursing homes receive through the Medicare and Medicaid programs, there is a strong federal interest in protecting the health and safety of nursing home residents. To help us determine whether additional federal oversight is necessary, we request that GAO study the following issues:

- (1) The prevalence of sex offenders and prisoners being placed in or paroled to nursing homes in California, Oklahoma, and Minnesota, as well as in other parts of the country;
- (2) The prevalence of physical and sexual abuse caused by sex offenders and prisoners in nursing homes;
- (3) Whether nursing home staff members and family members of nursing home residents are given sufficient notice about placements of sex offenders and prisoners;
- (4) Whether sex offenders and prisoners are being appropriately supervised and/or segregated from other nursing home residents; and

¹ See, e.g., *Sex Offenders' Unlikely Refuge*, Dallas Morning News (July 11, 2004); *Sex Offenders in Nursing Home Reviewed*, Star Tribune (June 3, 2004); *Nursing Home Residents Assaulted*, Saint Paul Pioneer Press (May 27, 2004); *Predators Living Among the Vulnerable*, Tulsa World (May 9, 2004); *Nursing Home Cited for Inaction After Parolee Abuses Residents*, Associated Press (Apr. 8, 2004).

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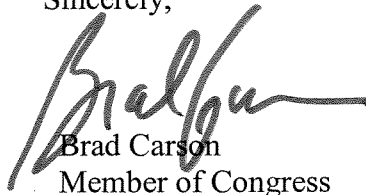
(5) Whether additional federal oversight of this problem is required.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Chris Lu (Rep. Waxman) at 6-5860, Clare Jenkins (Rep. Carson) at 5-2701, or Stacy Stordahl (Rep. McCollum) at 5-6631.

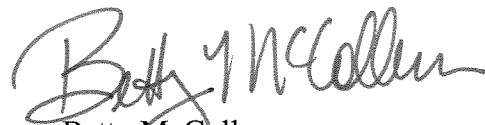
Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Government Reform



Brad Carson
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress