January 25, 2021

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky  
The Honorable Gus Bilirakis  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2367 Rayburn House Office Building  
2354 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC  20515  
Washington, DC  20515

Dear Representatives Schakowsky and Bilirakis:

AARP, on behalf of our 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, is pleased to endorse the Advancing Connectivity during the Coronavirus to Ensure Support for Seniors Act (ACCESS Act). We appreciate your bipartisan leadership and commitment to improving access to virtual visitation for nursing home residents and their families during the coronavirus public health emergency.

During this frightening time, the health, safety, and well-being of people living in nursing homes, assisted living, and other residential care facilities is paramount, which is why it is so critical that they have the ability to virtually visit and communicate with their loved ones, including but not limited to if in-person visitation is restricted. Expanding access to telehealth in nursing homes can also help ensure more efficient and effective access to care.

The ACCESS Act would provide $50 million to the Telehealth Resource Center Program to help facilitate the development of telehealth technologies for nursing homes. Importantly, the legislation provides grants to nursing homes to support virtual visits and requires these facilities to ensure residents can access these visits and get the help they need to do so. The grants would be used to obtain and use technologies and services necessary to support virtual visits. These resources are important to enable more residents and families to stay connected – including via video – both to help combat social isolation and to allow families to ensure their loved ones are being well cared for.

AARP has called on Congress to do more to support virtual visitation, and the ACCESS Act is an important part of that effort. We appreciate your bipartisan leadership to expand access to virtual visitation and telehealth, and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure that people can virtually visit their loved ones during this stressful and difficult time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Rhonda Richards on our Government Affairs team at rrichards@aarp.org.

Sincerely,

Bill Sweeney  
Senior Vice President  
Government Affairs