The Honorable Mitch McConnell The Honorable Chuck Schumer

Senate Majority Leader Senate Minority Leader

Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer:

The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) have serious reservations about the ADA Education and Reform Act (H.R. 620) and the injurious impact it would have on people with disabilities, including many older adults. The House of Representatives approved H.R. 620 by a vote of 225 to 192 on February 15, 2018. If this bill is brought to you for consideration, we urge you to vote against H.R. 620 or any companion legislation introduced in the Senate.

LCAO is a coalition of non-profit organizations serving older Americans. Our 70 member association is diverse and dedicated to preserving and strengthening the well-being of America’s older population. We provide a voice for seniors and their families in the ongoing national debate on aging policy and share a conviction that government has a responsibility to protect the rights of all people including persons with disabilities. While not all older Americans have life-long disabilities, most older Americans acquire disabilities as they age and many serve as family caregivers for others who have disabilities. Laws protecting people with disabilities are very important to older adults in this country.

When President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 (ADA) he said, “Let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down.” Today, our society is more open and accessible to people with disabilities than ever before, and the ADA has become a global model for disability access and inclusion. H.R. 620 would frustrate this progress by undermining the ADA. The bill would impose new burdens on plaintiffs before they can file a civil action for an accessibility violation in a public accommodation case and would eliminate any incentive for businesses to proactively follow the law. People with disabilities should not be denied access to public accommodations because of business owners’ failures to comply with the ADA.

Under H.R. 620, an individual with a disability who seeks to challenge a public accommodation violation would have to wait up to 180 days before being able to file a civil action with the U.S. Department of Justice. This would represent a stark departure from the immediate injunctive relief available under the ADA. No other members of a federally protected class have to wait to exercise their legal rights alleging discrimination, just as people with disabilities should not have to wait months to enforce their civil rights under the ADA.

We urge you to support the progress we have made under the ADA. Please oppose H.R. 620.