

Sen. Manchin Must Support Build Back Better And Its Billions For Senior Care As West Virginia Providers Warn Of A "Perfect Storm" And A "Looming Staffing Crisis"

SUMMARY: Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV)—who has yet [to endorse](#) the Build Back Better Act even after winning "[several big concessions](#)" during the bill's months-long negotiations process—has said he is concerned about ensuring care for the seniors of West Virginia, which has one of the [oldest populations](#) in the nation.

But Sen. Manchin's reluctance to back Build Back Better comes despite its [billions of dollars](#) to alleviate the severe shortage of direct care workers, who help [millions of senior, disabled, and otherwise vulnerable Americans](#) to stay healthy and independent.

As [86%](#) of nursing homes and [77%](#) of assisted living facilities nationwide have reported worsening staff shortages, a major care industry representative has advocated for Build Back Better's "[meaningful investments in long-term care, which will help address key staffing challenges](#)."

In Sen. Manchin's own state of West Virginia, direct care providers have warned of how dire the staffing situation is—all in the past few weeks:

- The CEO of the West Virginia Health Care Association, a long-term care group, warned of a "[perfect storm](#)" of staffing challenges, "[most pronounced](#)" in direct care providers like registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.
- The West Virginia Hospital Association's President and CEO called care staffing shortages "[by far the No. 1 challenge](#)" facing hospitals and warned of a "[pending, looming staffing crisis](#)" that could result in facility closures.
- West Virginia's care facilities may be forced to rely on "[high cost](#)" staffing agencies, with one assisted living facility owner calling the costs of such an approach "[almost unattainable](#)" while warning that costs would "[ultimately be shoved on down to our seniors](#)."

Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV), Who Continued To Refuse Endorsing The Build Back Better Act Even After Winning "Several Big Concessions," Has Said, "As A State With A High Senior Population, We Must Continue To Ensure That Our Greatest Generation Receives The Care They Need And Deserve."

November 2021: Sen. Manchin Refused To Endorse The Build Back Better Act, "Demand[ing] More Time To Evaluate" Its Impact, Even After He And "Fellow Centrist" Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) "Already Won Several Big Concessions" As The Legislation Was Reduced From \$3.5 Trillion To \$1.75 Trillion.

November 1, 2021: Sen. Manchin Refused To Endorse The Build Back Better Act As He "Demanded More Time To Evaluate The Projected Impact" Of The \$1.75 Trillion Legislation. "Centrist Sen. Joe Manchin on Monday demanded more time to evaluate the projected impact of President Joe Biden's \$1.75 trillion social spending bill, refusing to endorse the framework that Biden had told House Democrats was a done deal in the Senate late last week." [CNBC, [11/01/21](#)]

- **Headline: Manchin Stalls Progress On Biden's Social Safety Net And Climate Plan As House Works To Finalize Bill** [CNBC, [11/01/21](#)]

Sen. Manchin Said He Wanted To See "The Impact It Will Have On Our National Debt, Our Economy And The American People." "Before he would agree to back the spending bill, Manchin said he needed to see a detailed analysis of the economic impacts of it. 'I will not support a bill that is this consequential without thoroughly understanding the impact it will have on our national debt, our economy and the American people,' he said. 'That is why we must allow time for complete transparency and analysis on the impact of changes to our tax code and energy and climate policies.'" [CNBC, [11/01/21](#)]

Sen. Manchin And "Fellow Centrist" Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) Had "Already Won Several Big Concessions" To Reduce The Scope Of The Build Back Better Agenda, Which Was Originally Set To Cost \$3.5 Trillion. "Manchin, along with fellow centrist Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., have already won several big concessions in negotiations over Biden's social safety net and climate plan. The measure, originally pegged at \$3.5 trillion, would pay for universal preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds, expand Medicaid and Medicare, and dedicate \$550 billion to clean energy and climate change programs, among other things." [CNBC, [11/01/21](#)]

Sen. Manchin Maintains A Web Page Dedicated To Seniors, And He Has Said Elsewhere, "As A State With A High Senior Population, We Must Continue To Ensure That Our Greatest Generation Receives The Care They Need And Deserve. I Will Always Advocate For West Virginians' Access To Healthcare."

Sen. Manchin Has A Page Dedicated To "Seniors," Where He States, "West Virginia's Seniors Helped Build This Nation And Senator Manchin Is Committed To Ensuring We Keep The Promises Made To Them." "West Virginia's seniors helped build this nation and Senator Manchin is committed to ensuring we keep the promises made to them. To West Virginia's seniors, Social Security and Medicare are not just government programs, they are promises made by a thankful nation to ensure a quality of life well-earned from years of hard work and sacrifice." [Sen. Joe Manchin, accessed [11/05/21](#)]

April 2020: As Sen. Manchin Touted New Funding For Senior Services In West Virginia, He Said, "As A State With A High Senior Population, We Must Continue To Ensure That Our Greatest Generation Receives The Care They Need And Deserve. I Will Always Advocate For West Virginians' Access To Healthcare." "U.S. Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, today announced \$2,571,641 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for senior services across West Virginia. 'This funding is critical to ensuring seniors in West Virginia have access to the care and essential services every citizen deserves, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic which disproportionately affects elderly West Virginians. As a state with a high senior population, we must continue to ensure that our greatest generation receives the care they need and deserve. I will always advocate for West Virginians' access to healthcare and will continue to fight for them in Washington,' said Senator Manchin." [Sen. Joe Manchin, [04/02/20](#)]

West Virginia Has "One Of The Nation's Oldest Populations," Was The Third-Oldest State In The Country As Of 2018—With The Percentage Of Seniors Predicted To Increase Over The Next Decade—And Nearly A Quarter Of Its Workers Are 55 Or Older And At Higher Risk Of Serious Conditions That Require Care.

West Virginia Has "One Of The Nation's Oldest Populations," And Was The Third-Oldest State In The Country As Of 2019, With 20% Of Its Population Aged 65 Or Older.

West Virginia Is "A Poor State With One Of The Nation's Oldest Populations." "Supporters of a decades-old proposal to let workers take time off for medical needs including childbirth, surgeries and end-of-life care

are dealing with another disappointment in Manchin's home of West Virginia, a poor state with one of the nation's oldest populations." [Associated Press, [10/31/21](#)]

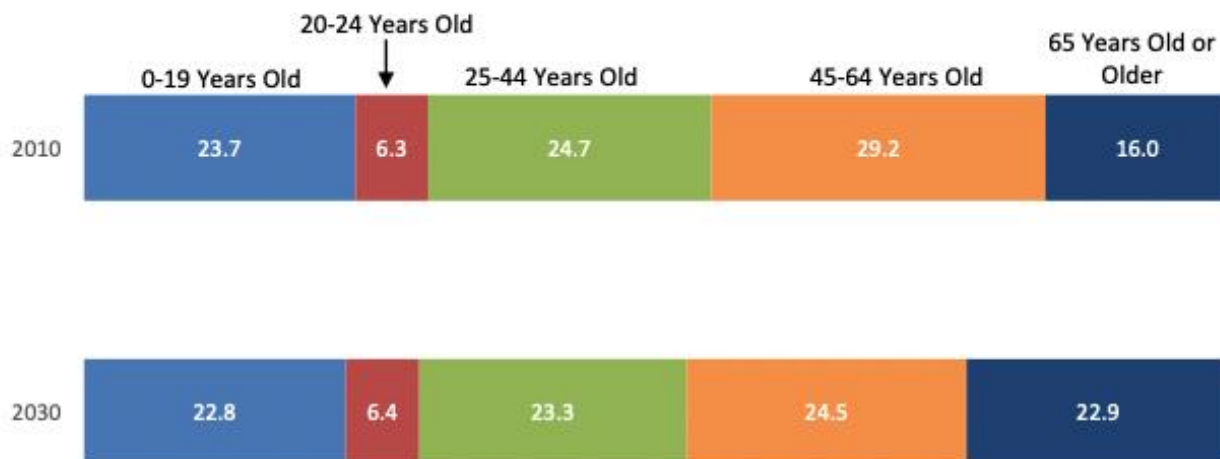
As Of 2019, West Virginia Had The Third-Oldest Population Of Any State, With 20% Of Its Population Aged 65 Or Older. "The four states with the highest percentage of their populations age 65 and older in 2019 were Maine (21%), Florida (21%), West Virginia (20%), and Vermont (20%)." [Administration for Community Living, [May 2021](#)]

West Virginia University's Bureau Of Business And Economic Research Predicted The State's Population Aged 65 Years Or Older Will Increase To Nearly 23% By 2030, Largely Due To An "Aging Baby Boomer Population."

A 2014 Study By West Virginia University's Bureau Of Business And Economic Research Predicted The State's Population Over The Age Of 65 Will "Increase To Approximately 22.9 Percent In 2030." "Overall, we expect that the share of the state's population that is over the age of 65 to increase to approximately 22.9 percent in 2030 from 16.0 percent in 2010. In a similar pattern, the share of the state's population that is of prime working age (age 20-44) will decline to 23.3 percent in 2030 from 24.7 percent in 2010. Overall, West Virginia will remain one of the oldest states in the US, which stands in sharp contrast to mid-20th century when the Mountain State was one of the youngest states in the nation." [West Virginia University Bureau of Business and Economic Research, [March 2014](#)]

West Virginia's "Total Population Aged 65 Years Or Older Is Expected To Rise By More Than 41 Percent Between 2010 And 2030," With 93 Percent Of This Increase Due To An "Aging Baby Boomer Population." "Total population aged 65 years or older is expected to rise by more than 41 percent between 2010 and 2030, an increase of nearly 123,300 people. About 93 percent of this increase comes from the aging Baby Boomer population." [West Virginia University Bureau of Business and Economic Research, [March 2014](#)]

Figure 5: West Virginia Population by Age, 2010 vs. 2030



Sources: US Census Bureau; authors' calculations.

[West Virginia University Bureau of Business and Economic Research, [March 2014](#)]

Nearly A Quarter Of West Virginia's Workers Are 55 Or Older, With Higher Risk Of Serious Conditions That Require Care.

Nearly One Quarter of West Virginian Workers Are 55 Or Older, With Higher Risk Of Serious Medical Conditions That Require Care. "Nearly one in four workers is age 55 and older. [...] Older workers are more likely to experience serious medical conditions that require care." [National Partnership for Women & Families, [January 2021](#)]

The Build Back Better Act Includes Billions Of Dollars To Address The Shortage Of Direct Care Workers Who Help Millions Of Senior, Disabled, And Otherwise Vulnerable Americans, As Well As Help Seniors Stay In Their Homes As Opposed To "Nursing Homes Or Other Congregate Settings."

The Build Back Better Act Includes Billions Of Dollars To Address The Shortage Of Direct Care Workers, Who "Provide Daily Assistance To Millions Of Older Americans, People With Disabilities, And Others With Chronic Care Needs" – Direct Care Workers Are "Disproportionally Vulnerable To Low Wages And Unstable Working Conditions," Particularly During The COVID-19 Pandemic.

As Of November 5, 2021, The Build Back Better Act Included \$150 Billion "To Expand Access To Quality Home-Based Care For Millions Of Older Adults And People With Disabilities," Including Resources To Strengthen The "Direct Care Workforce." "Provides for Home and Community-Based Services with an investment of \$150 billion to expand access to quality home-based care for millions of older adults and people with disabilities. This funding includes resources to improve our national care infrastructure by strengthening the direct care workforce." [House Committee on the Budget, [11/05/21](#)]

- "Direct Care Workers Assist Older Adults And People With Disabilities With Daily Tasks, Such As Dressing, Bathing, And Eating. Direct Care Workers Include Personal Care Aides, Home Health Aides, And Nursing Assistants." [PHI, accessed [11/08/21](#)]
- Direct Care Workers "Provide Daily Assistance To Millions Of Older Americans, People With Disabilities, And Others With Chronic Care Needs." "Direct care workers provide daily assistance to millions of older Americans, people with disabilities, and others with chronic care needs. Direct care workers include personal care aides, home health aides, and nursing assistants." [House Education & Labor Committee, [05/04/21](#)]

Direct Care Workers Are "Disproportionally Vulnerable To Low Wages And Unstable Working Conditions," Particularly On The Frontlines Of The Pandemic. "Direct care workers continue to be disproportionately vulnerable to low wages and unstable working conditions, even as they endure significant health risks to work on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. The rate of injury among direct care workers is over three times higher than other professions while the current median wage for direct care workers is just under \$13 an hour." [House Education & Labor Committee, [05/04/21](#)]

As Of November 3, 2021, The Build Back Better Act Included \$20 Billion To "Help Workers Secure Good-Paying Jobs," Including Funding To "To Recruit And Retain Direct Care Workers" And " Help Address The Direct Care Workforce Shortage." "The Build Back Better Act invests \$20 billion in proven programs to help workers secure good-paying jobs. This investment will: [...] Fund strategies to recruit and retain direct care workers, including raising wages and creating training opportunities to help address the direct care workforce shortage, [...]" [House Committee on Education and Labor, [11/03/21](#)]

Build Back Better Includes Over \$1 Billion To Help Fund Older Americans Act Programs Meant To "Help Vulnerable Americans Stay Safe, Healthy, And Independent," While Also Building On The American Rescue Plan's Investments "Help[ing] Seniors And People With Disabilities Live Safely In Their Homes And Communities Rather Than In Nursing Homes Or Other Congregate Settings."

As Of November 3, 2021, The Build Back Better Act Included Over \$1 Billion For Older Americans Act Programs That "Help Vulnerable Americans Stay Safe, Healthy, And Independent." "The *Build Back*

Better Act also invests in services for older Americans and Americans with disabilities by: [...] Providing more than \$1 billion for proven *Older Americans Act* programs to extend vital services that help vulnerable Americans stay safe, healthy, and independent and additional investments to help people with disabilities learn, work, and thrive in their communities." [House Committee on Education and Labor, [11/03/21](#)]

- **The 1965 Older Americans Act Was Enacted To Address A "Lack Of Community Social Services For Older Persons," With The Legislation Now "Considered To Be A Major Vehicle For The Organization And Delivery Of Social And Nutrition Services To [Seniors] And Their Caregivers."** "Congress passed the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1965 in response to concern by policymakers about a lack of community social services for older persons. [...] Although older individuals may receive services under many other federal programs, today the OAA is considered to be a major vehicle for the organization and delivery of social and nutrition services to this group and their caregivers." [Administration for Community Living, accessed [11/08/21](#)]

As Of November 3, 2021, The Build Back Better Act "Builds On" The American Rescue Plan's Home-And Community-Based Care Investments Meant To "Help Seniors And People With Disabilities Live Safely In Their Homes And Communities Rather Than In Nursing Homes Or Other Congregate Settings." "Build Back Better builds on the HCBS [home- and community-based services] investments included in the American Rescue Plan, which made additional federal funding available (also through an FMAP increase) for one year beginning in April 2021 for states to bolster their efforts during the pandemic to help seniors and people with disabilities live safely in their homes and communities rather than in nursing homes or other congregate settings. This funding is helping states shore up HCBS and prevent an erosion of services that could undermine future efforts to expand HCBS to all people who need them." [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [11/03/21](#)]

Nationwide, The Vast Majority Of Direct Care Providers Have Reported Worsening Staffing Problems And A Major Industry Representative Has Advocated For Build Back Better's "Meaningful Investments In Long-Term Care, Which Will Help Address Key Staffing Challenges."

October 2021: The American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) Found That 86% Of Nursing Homes And 77% Of Assisted Living Facilities Faced Worsening Staffing Issues, With 70% Of Them Being Forced To Hire From "Expensive" Staffing Agencies.

October 2021: The American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) Found That 86% Of Nursing Homes And 77% Of Assisted Living Facilities Experienced Worsening Workforce Issues Over The Previous Three Months. "The American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), representing more than 14,000 nursing homes and long-term care facilities nationwide, released a survey of nursing home and assisted living providers across the country and found 86% of nursing homes and 77% of assisted living providers said their workforce situation has gotten worse over the past three months." [The Herald-Dispatch, [10/03/21](#)]

The AHCA/NCAL Survey Found That "Nearly Every" Facility Had Been Asking Staff To Work Overtime Or Take Extra Shifts. "Due to worker shortages, nearly every nursing home and assisted living community is asking staff to work overtime or extra shifts, according to the survey." [The Herald-Dispatch, [10/03/21](#)]

The AHCA/NCAL Found That 70% Of Nursing Homes And Assisted Living Communities Had To Hire "Expensive Agency Staff To Maintain Adequate Staffing Levels." "The survey showed nearly 70% of nursing homes and assisted living communities must hire expensive agency staff to maintain adequate staffing levels." [The Herald-Dispatch, [10/03/21](#)]

The U.S. Bureau Of Labor Statistics Has Projected The Home Health And Personal Care Workforce Will Grow Over 20% By 2029, As Over 10,000 Americans Turn 65 Daily. "As more than 10,000 Americans turn

65 every day, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected the home health and personal care aide workforce to grow more than 20% by 2029, the highest in any industry." [The Herald-Dispatch, [10/03/21](#)]

AHCA/NCAL's President And CEO Called Build Back Better An "Appropriate Vehicle" For A Long-Term Care Staffing Solution: "Congress Has The Opportunity Right Now [...] To Include Meaningful Investments In Long-Term Care, Which Will Help Address Key Staffing Challenges."

AHCA/NCAL's President And CEO Said The Build Back Better Reconciliation Package Was An "Appropriate Vehicle For Congress To Fund A Long-Term Solution To Addressing Chronic Staffing Shortages In Nursing Homes And Other Long-Term Care Facilities." "Mark Parkinson, president and CEO of AHCA/NCAL, says the survey demonstrates the severe workforce challenges long term care providers are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [...] Parkinson said the reconciliation package currently under construction is an appropriate vehicle for Congress to fund a long-term solution to addressing chronic staffing shortages in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities." [The Herald-Dispatch, [10/03/21](#)]

AHCA/NCAL's President And CEO: "Congress Has The Opportunity Right Now, Through Budget Reconciliation, To Include Meaningful Investments In Long-Term Care, Which Will Help Address Key Staffing Challenges." "Congress has the opportunity right now, through budget reconciliation, to include meaningful investments in long-term care, which will help address key staffing challenges,' he said. 'Our caregivers are the backbone of long-term care, and they deserve the full support of our lawmakers. We cannot allow facilities to close because of these challenges, which will directly impact residents and their families, especially when lawmakers have the means to help solve this dire situation.'" [The Herald-Dispatch, [10/03/21](#)]

November 2021: Leaders Of Prominent West Virginia Care Groups Warned Of A "Perfect Storm" In Direct Care Staffing Shortages And A "Pending, Looming Staffing Crisis" That Could Result In Facility Closures—One Facility Owner Warned Of Having To Rely On Staffing Agencies Whose High-Costs Would "Ultimately Be Shoved On Down To Our Seniors."

November 2021: The CEO Of The West Virginia Health Care Association, A Long-Term Care Group, Warned Of A "Perfect Storm" Of Staffing Challenges, "Most Pronounced" In Direct Care—including Registered Nurses And Licensed Practical Nurses.

November 2021: The CEO Of The West Virginia Health Care Association, A "Long-Term Care Sector" Group, Said, "I Think What We're Starting To See Is Almost A Perfect Storm Of Staffing Challenges All Colliding At The Same Time." "I think what we're starting to see is almost a perfect storm of staffing challenges all colliding at the same time,' said Marty Wright, CEO of the West Virginia Health Care Association, an industry group representing the long-term care sector." [The State Journal, [11/01/21](#)]

- **Many Long-Term Care Workers Have Left The Workforce "Due To Burnout" From The Pandemic.** "In the early days of the pandemic, there were 'staff sitting on the sidelines' who decided to come into the field to augment the workforce facing COVID-19 challenges, said Larry Pack, CEO of Stonerise Healthcare, which manages long-term care facilities throughout West Virginia and southeast Ohio. That has changed, he said. Many workers have left the workforce due to burnout, mostly through retirements, but with some simply resigning and leaving the industry, according to Wright." [The State Journal, [11/01/21](#)]

According To The West Virginia Health Care Association's CEO, The Staff Shortages Were "Most Pronounced Among Those Involved In Direct Care — The Registered Nurses And Licensed Practical Nurses." "While the staffing shortages are showing up in positions across the board, it is most pronounced

among those involved in direct care — the registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, Wright said." [The State Journal, [11/01/21](#)]

The West Virginia Health Care Association's CEO Said The Most Recent COVID-19 Surge "Undoubtedly Stretched The Staffing And Bed Availability In West Virginia To The Breaking Point." "West Virginia Health Care Association CEO Marty Wright said the current surge of COVID-19 has undoubtedly stretched the staffing and bed availability in West Virginia to the breaking point for both hospitals and long-term care communities. 'It has placed an unprecedented stress on our frontline healthcare workers, yet they still strive to provide quality care to all ailing West Virginians,' Wright said." [The Herald-Dispatch, [10/03/21](#)]

November 2021: The West Virginia Hospital Association's President And CEO Called Care Staffing Shortages "By Far The No. 1 Challenge" Facing Hospitals And Warned Of A "Pending, Looming Staffing Crisis" That Could Result In Facility Closures.

November 2021: The West Virginia Hospital Association's President And CEO Called Care Staffing Shortages "By Far The No. 1 Challenge" That Hospitals Face. "West Virginia Hospital Association President and CEO Jim Kaufman called staffing issues 'by far the No. 1 challenge' facing hospitals today." [The State Journal, [11/01/21](#)]

According To The West Virginia Health Care Association CEO, There Could Be A "Pending, Looming Staffing Crisis" In Care Staffing, Which Could Result In "Potential Closures." "The current situation could signal a 'pending, looming staffing crisis,' according to Wright. In West Virginia, 'we're not to the point where people are not being cared for,' he said. 'That's not where we are, but people see it coming that this could be an issue and the more things that kind of get thrown into this mix ... the more we are going to have those challenges where we could face potential closures and issues, but we're not there yet.'" [The State Journal, [11/01/21](#)]

West Virginia's Care Facilities May Be Forced To Rely On "High Cost" Staffing Agencies, With One Assisted Living Facility Owner Calling The Costs Of Such An Approach "Almost Unattainable" And Warning That Costs Would "Ultimately Be Shoved On Down To Our Seniors."

West Virginia Care Facilities "May Be Forced To Find Workers Through Staffing Agencies, Often At A High Cost." "To get through the shortage, facilities may be forced to find workers through staffing agencies, often at a high cost." [The State Journal, [11/01/21](#)]

One West Virginia Assisted Living Facility Owner Said It Was "Very Expensive" To Hire Agency Staff, Calling The Costs "Almost Unattainable" And Warning They Would "Ultimately Be Shoved On Down To Our Seniors That Live With Us." "'For us to use an agency to fill these positions is very expensive,' Perry said. 'It's almost unattainable for us in the private sector to pay those types of costs. It would ultimately be shoved on down to our seniors that live with us. We don't want to do that.'" [The Herald-Dispatch, [10/03/21](#)]

- **Patricia Perry Owns An Assisted Living Facility In Barboursville, West Virginia.** "Patricia Perry has faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the staffing shortage at the assisted living community she owns and operates could be the most daunting. 'When the pandemic hit I think many people that worked in a long-term care, assisted living environment just left because of the risk of COVID,' said Perry, who owns the Village at Riverview in Barboursville. 'Many of them have never returned, and we have not been able to attract new workers.'" [The Herald-Dispatch, [10/03/21](#)]

