

Statement of Senator Larry E. Craig
Senate Special Committee on Aging
Assisted Living Reexamined: Developing Policy and Practices to Ensure Quality Care
April 16, 2002

Last April this Committee held its second hearing on the Assisted Living industry. Afterwards, we tasked consumer and industry groups to come together and recommend ways to make the quality and care in assisted living facilities better. That was a unique situation and we - and most of you - were uncertain how the process would work. I hope we can all agree the process of coming together has worked well.

However, I think we all know the true indicator of the Assisted Living Workgroup will be the end product that you develop and the willingness of states and facilities to incorporate it into their practices. As you continue the process over the next year, I hope you keep that in mind.

There are now over 30,000 assisted living facilities in the United States housing approximately one million people. Since such large numbers of seniors are choosing assisted living facilities, I still feel committed that the Special Committee on Aging needs to remain engaged in this issue.

In that year, you have all been very busy and I appreciate your being here to provide to the Committee an update on the progress you have made. From the information you have provided, I can tell that it is substantial. You now have topic groups on the important issues of Resident Rights and Facility Ethics, Staffing, Resident Direct Care Services, Operations, Medication Management, and Affordability.

As we know from our previous hearings on this issue, assisted living facilities are not regulated at the federal level. Instead states are responsible for oversight. Your assisted living workgroups now have the responsibility to make certain that states are providing appropriate oversight and guidance.

It has been a busy - and I am sure interesting year - for all of you. Thank you for the work you have done and I look forward to hearing your thoughts.