



2022 South Dakota Legislature

House Concurrent Resolution 6012

Introduced by: **Representative Soye**

1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, urging the development of options for ensuring**
2 **continued visitation of patients and residents in nursing facilities and assisted**
3 **living centers.**

4 WHEREAS, each day, the talented and dedicated people who staff South Dakota nursing
5 facilities and assisted living centers work tirelessly to ensure that the patients and residents
6 entrusted to them receive the best possible care; and

7 WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the day-to-day challenges of operating
8 nursing facilities and assisted living centers became exponentially increased by the need to
9 prepare for and address the high rates of infection, morbidity, and mortality being seen in like
10 settings across the country; and

11 WHEREAS, the vulnerable nature of their patients and residents, combined with the
12 inherent risks of congregate living in a healthcare setting, caused the imposition of aggressive
13 measures to limit exposure to COVID-19 and the spread of COVID-19 within each facility and
14 center; and

15 WHEREAS, these aggressive measures included restricting virtually all in-person visitation
16 and interaction with friends, family, and non-essential healthcare personnel; and

17 WHEREAS, the resulting physical separation took an immeasurable emotional and physical
18 toll on patients and residents, as well as on their loved ones; and

19 WHEREAS, for many patients and residents, the social isolation led to increases in
20 depression, anxiety, and distress; and

21 WHEREAS, for patients and residents with cognitive impairments or other disabilities, the
22 restrictions were also confusing and upsetting; and

1 WHEREAS, the institutional efforts to mitigate the risk of infection among patients and
2 residents resulted in an unintentional but seriously detrimental violation of the right to receive
3 visitors at the time of the patient's or resident's own choosing;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Ninety-
5 Seventh Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that while
6 safeguarding the health and wellbeing of this state's vulnerable elderly population is a
7 laudable goal and not easily achievable during a pandemic, the measures undertaken in
8 pursuit of that goal must never again result in the de facto imprisonment and sequestration
9 of our elderly family members, friends, and neighbors; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that nursing facilities and assisted living centers be urged to
11 work collectively for the development and implementation of options that safeguard the health
12 and well-being of their patients and residents, while recognizing that quality of life is greatly
13 dependent on regular and frequent personal interactions that promote physical, mental, and
14 psychosocial well-being; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the South Dakota congressional
16 delegation be urged to join with their counterparts from the other states to ensure that any
17 federal statutes, regulations, guidance, and orders addressing the health and well-being of
18 patients and residents, in nursing facilities and assisted living centers, during a pandemic,
19 incorporate ongoing visitation and personal interactions, and support the efforts of the
20 facilities and centers to provide such opportunities to patients, residents, and their loves ones.