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The Honorable Bernie Sanders
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sanders,

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice) commends you for the introduction of the *Older Americans Act Amendments of 2013*. We support this critical legislation, which is a much-needed first step towards reauthorizing essential *Older Americans Act* programs, and are particularly pleased that it includes provisions to protect the rights and well-being of elders living in long-term care facilities, as well as those at home and in the community.

As you are aware, residents of long-term care facilities need effective advocacy in order to ensure that they receive the quality of care and quality of life they deserve and are entitled to by law. The purpose of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is to provide residents with access to such advocacy. The *Older Americans Act Amendments of 2013* would strengthen and improve this program's effectiveness in a number of important ways. This legislation would clarify both organizational and individual conflicts of interest within the program; clarify that the State Ombudsman is responsible for the management of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, including the office's fiscal management; improve resident access to ombudsmen; and ensure that State Ombudsmen receive ongoing training. It would also enhance the ability of the National Ombudsman Resource Center to train and support both state and local ombudsmen by increasing the Center's funding.

Furthermore, older adults receiving services and supports at home also deserve similar protections to ensure they are receiving high-quality care and a good quality of life. Yet these individuals have few, if any, rights and protections under current law. The *Older Americans Act Amendments of 2013* would guarantee home care consumers basic rights, including the right to safety, as well as information about costs, choice, and redress of grievances. The legislation would also advance the development of ombudsman advocacy for home care consumers, who are frequently just as frail and vulnerable as nursing home residents.

The Consumer Voice thanks you and your staff for the hard work and dedication that led to the introduction of the *Older Americans Act Amendments of 2013*. We look forward to continuing to work with your office in support of this vital bill during the coming months.

Sincerely,



Sarah Wells
Executive Director



Robyn Grant
Director of Public Policy & Advocacy

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly NCCNHR) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit membership organization founded in 1975 by Elma L. Holder that advocates for quality care and quality of life for consumers in all long-term-care settings.