Tell Congress to Increase Funding for the Ombudsman Program

Congress will be making important budget decisions on March 23 when legislators vote on the Omnibus Appropriations Act. Consumer Voice has written a letter to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees and the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies subcommittees requesting increased funding for the long-term care ombudsman program.

We urge you to contact your members of Congress to make a similar request by Friday, March 23.

- By email: Click here to use our online advocacy system to send a pre-crafted message.
- By phone: Call your members of Congress.

1. Identify your two Senators and your Congressperson. If you don’t know who they are, go to: https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members, then use the drop down menu where it says, "Or select a state to list all senators and representatives from that state." As soon as you select your state, your members of Congress will pop up.

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Tuesday, March 27: Nursing Home-to-Community Transitions: Success through Collaborative Advocacy, 2:00pm ET, Webinar from National Center on Law & Elder Rights

April 8-14: National Crime Victims’ Rights Week

April 15-21: National Volunteer Week
2. Call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. Follow the prompts.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a vital program that protects residents' rights and helps ensure residents are receiving quality care and quality of life in their chosen long-term care setting. It is the only program federally mandated to advocate on behalf of residents of long-term care facilities. But despite its mandate, the LTCOP is currently unable to provide residents with the assistance they need and are entitled to due to insufficient funding. Additional money for the LTCOP would mean that nursing home and assisted living facility residents who are among our nation's most vulnerable citizens have someone on their side, at their side.

Bipartisan Legislation Introduced in Minnesota to Fight Elder Abuse

Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton, along with other MN lawmakers, have introduced bipartisan legislation to help protect seniors from elder abuse. The legislation comes after criticism of the Minnesota Department of Health's serious backlog of investigating elder abuse claims. At the beginning of 2018, the department had more than 3,000 reports of abuse and maltreatment that had not yet been investigated. The bipartisan bill includes three key components: licensing existing facilities and creating strict requirements for staffing and training; more rights for residents and families; and harsher criminal and civil penalties. The Minnesota Department of Health says they have taken care of the backlog of complaints and have closed over half of the open investigations. But, with 400 cases of abuse being reported in the state each week, the proposed legislation aims to stop elder abuse from happening altogether. For more information, click here.

n4a University Course on Volunteer Engagement
n4a has announced an online course through Boston University’s Center for Aging & Disability Education & Research (CADER) on Volunteer Engagement in the Aging Network. The course provides agency staff with the tools they need to effectively engage and leverage the skills of volunteers to better serve older adults in their communities. Participants will learn how to assess their volunteer program and create a logic model for further planning and program evaluation. Course discussion will cover the role of staff in leading volunteer engagement and strategies for volunteer recruitment. CEUs are available for completion of the course. Register for the course here.

Spotlight on Resources

The Consumer Voice and the National Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC) have a multitude of resources available online covering a wide range of long-term care topics. Visit the Consumer Voice website and the NORC website to explore all the available resources. Take a look at this week’s highlighted resource:

Volunteer Recruitment Videos - View examples of volunteer recruitment videos on NORC's website.

About The Voice

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Consumer Voice is the leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves. We are a primary source of information and tools for consumers, families, caregivers, advocates and ombudsmen to help ensure quality care for the individual. Consumer Voice’s mission is to represent consumers at the national level for quality long-term care, services and supports.