



National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs

November 17, 2015

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chair
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chair
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We are writing to you as two of the nation's principal organizations working to improve the quality of care in long-term care facilities and protect the rights of residents. We are the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care and the National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs.

As your Subcommittees work to determine appropriate funding levels for the remainder of fiscal year 2016, we request that you focus on some of our nation's truly most vulnerable elders – residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities and those who have been the victims of elder abuse and exploitation.

Please consider the great good that can be accomplished by providing resources to secure additional long-term care ombudsman services to improve the quality of care of residents, and funds to enable Adult Protective Services Programs to better assist those that have been abused and exploited. We request your support for the following:

- Pre-sequestration funding levels of Title VII programs within the Older Americans Act (OAA);
- \$5 million authorized under the Elder Justice Act for **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program** (LTCOP) services and training to fight elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation (previously requested by the President); and
- The President's FY 2016 request of \$25 million for the **Elder Justice Initiative**. This funding would provide urgently needed support for state and local governments for adult protective services (APS), the front line of fighting elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

As you know, the primary function of the LTCOP is to identify, investigate, and resolve complaints that relate to the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Over the years both the number and complexity of the cases referred to LTCOPs have increased considerably. Long-term care ombudsmen are needed now more than ever in nursing homes, board and care facilities and in assisted living communities. Issues ombudsmen address include working to avoid the misuse of antipsychotic medications in facilities and protecting residents who are being forced to leave their homes because a facility chooses to no longer accept Medicaid or close its business.

Additional funding for the ombudsman program would enhance the ability of ombudsmen to prevent health care complications and costly, unnecessary hospitalizations and re-hospitalizations.

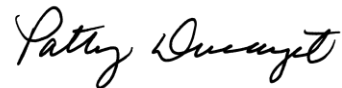
As member organizations of the Elder Justice Coalition, we have written to you separately about the Elder Justice Initiative. We continue to strongly support the funding it would provide for a unified APS data collection system, demonstration programs, research and additional APS services to protect elders and adults with disabilities.

Thank you for considering this request which would help ensure the health and safety of millions of older adults.

Sincerely,



Lori Smetanka, Interim Executive Director
Consumer Voice



Patty Ducayet, President
NASOP

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care was formed as NCCNHR (National Citizen's Coalition for Nursing Home Reform) in 1975 because of public concern about substandard care in nursing homes. It continues as the leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, and as a resource to residents, their families, caregivers, advocates and ombudsmen.

The National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs is a non-profit organization formed in 1985, and is composed of state long-term care ombudsmen representing their state programs created by the Older Americans Act.