



National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs

October 1, 2013

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
The Honorable Tom Harkin
The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Sanders, Harkin, and Alexander:

The National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP) is pleased to support your legislation, S. 1562, the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2013, which, among other things, would improve the capacity of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs to advocate for residents of long-term care facilities.

As you are well aware, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) identifies, investigates and resolves complaints made by or on behalf of residents of long-term care facilities that affect their health, safety, welfare, or rights. Clarifying that the LTCOP serves all residents of long-term care facilities regardless of age and that residents have regular, timely, private and unimpeded access to LTCOP services strengthens residents' rights to assistance from our Program. Clarifying the role of the LTCOP in advocating for residents unable to communicate their wishes will better protect frail and vulnerable residents. Recognizing that the LTCOP may continue to serve residents transitioning from a long-term care facility to a home care setting improves continuity of care and continued advocacy on behalf of consumers of long-term services and supports. Clarifying that the LTCOP is a Health Oversight Agency improves the Program's ability to investigate and resolve resident complaints. Removing individual and organizational conflicts of interest strengthens the integrity and ability of the LTCOP to advocate for residents without interference.

We applaud your vision and efforts to improve the whole Act and especially your attention to the often-neglected long-term care system. NASOP enthusiastically supports your efforts and this important legislation that protects the rights of all residents of long-term care facilities. We look forward to working with you as the OAA reauthorization process moves ahead.

Sincerely,

Joseph Rodrigues
President

Joseph Rodrigues, NASOP President
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