

NASOP

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAMS

March 20, 2026

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Subject: Support for the Essential Caregivers Act 2025 (H.R. 6766/S. 3492)

Dear Senators,

The National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP) is proud to support the **Essential Caregivers Act of 2025 (H.R. 6766/S. 3492)**.

Established in 1985, NASOP represents state-level advocates across all 50 states and three U.S. territories. Our mission is to advance the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP), mandated by the federal Older Americans Act to protect the safety and quality of life for nearly three million vulnerable adults. As “boots on the ground,” Long-Term Care Ombudsmen enter nursing homes and similar settings daily to resolve complaints and ensure residents’ rights are upheld. We are the first line of protection, supporting resident quality of life and care.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed a devastating truth: isolation can be as deadly as COVID-19 itself. While during the national health crisis, nursing homes practiced lockdown policies which were intended to protect. But the sudden and prolonged prohibition of family access to their residents caused irreparable functional and cognitive decline for millions of vulnerable adults. Long-term care ombudsmen witnessed firsthand how the absence of family caregivers led to profound loneliness, undiagnosed medical issues, suffering and the loss of life.

Your bill, the Essential Caregivers Act recognizes that family caregivers are not just "visitors"—but they are vital members of a resident's care team. They provide essential psychological, emotional, and physical care support that facility staff, however well-intentioned, cannot replicate.

This legislation is even more critical today as the long-term care sector is in a historic staffing crisis. With the aging "Baby Boomer" generation and high staff turnover, facilities are struggling to meet basic needs, and we do not see this problem improving in the future. The Essential Caregivers Act will be a critical safety net, providing personalized attention that improves resident care and well-being while it alleviates pressure on overstretched frontline direct care workers, especially during a health care crisis.

NASOP urges the passage of S. 3492 and H.R. 6766 to ensure that, even in times of crisis, no long-term care resident is ever again forced to endure the trauma of total isolation. We must codify the right to essential support to protect the dignity and well-being of our nation's most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,

Patricia Hunter, MSW
President, NASOP Board of Directors

Cc: Brian Lindberg, NASOP Policy Consultant

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