



*The Tree Unites the
Branches; The Branches
Bear the Fruit*

The ORANJ TREE

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ORANJ LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The ORANJ Legislative Committee has been very busy for the past several months attempting to get two separate bills approved in the Legislature. Both pieces of recommended legislation pertain to seniors living in CCRCs and have had widespread support by our membership.

Fair Return of Entry Deposits

On Saturday June 30, eight residents wearing ORANJ T-shirts watched from the gallery as Assembly Bill 2747 was adopted. Senate Bill 1532 was adopted at 8 am the next morning. The next step is the governor's signature. Each bill "limits time continuing care retirement communities may retain refundable entrance fees after resident vacates facility" and "provides for disposition of certain personal property." It wasn't easy. Along the way ORANJ had to work against amendments introduced by LeadingAge NJ, the trade association of providers of CCRCs, and its lobbyist, Princeton Public Affairs Group.



Ron Whalin, Alice Bakker, Herb Heineman, Bert Whalin, Maggie Heineman, Dave Marr, Gene Wachspress, and Gary Baldwin wearing T-shirts that proclaim

"Fair Senior Refunds, Bill A2747/S1532, ORANJ"

Here's a relatively short version of a long story. Last year, ORANJ crafted a draft bill which would eliminate the provision currently in contracts that requires a vacated unit to be re-contracted before a deposit is returned to the estate. The law would direct all newly signed refundable contracts to provide for the return of the refundable deposit based upon a first-in-first-out (FIFO) process, which assigns a sequential 'refund' number, among all available units with refundable entrance deposits, once the unit is restored pursuant to the contract. Refunds would then be returned in the number sequence of the FIFO process.

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Crane's Mill, *West Caldwell*
Crestwood Manor, *Whiting*
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Friends Village, *Woodstown*
Harrogate, *Lakewood*
House of the Good Shepherd,
Hackettstown
Lantern Hill, *New Providence*
Lions Gate, *Voorhees*
Meadow Lakes, *East Windsor*
Medford Leas, *Medford*
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ORANJ LEGISLATIVE ACTION (CONTINUED)

The fair refund bills moved separately in their respective bodies and had several amendments during the process. An amendment was added to the Assembly bill by the opposing lobbying group during an Assembly floor vote on May 23 without the ORANJ legislative team's knowledge. We strongly objected. Therefore Gary Baldwin and Ron Whalin met on June 1 with the bill's sponsor, District 11 Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling and his staff, along with representatives of the organizations responsible for the amendment: LeadingAge NJ, Princeton Public Affairs Group (PPAG), and Erickson Living (via teleconference from Baltimore). The amendment allowed for the "pooling" (grouping for refunding purposes) of like units to permit a delay in returning deposits. ORANJ objected, suggesting that it would create delays in deposit returns for selected categories/pools.

Following our objections, new language was crafted by PPAG and LeadingAge NJ as a compromise and was placed in a second amendment by Assemblyman Houghtaling's office. The new wording retained our emphasis on using a first-in-first-out process and eliminated the reference to the pooling concept.

A second provision was added by the lobbying group that required the estate of a vacated unit to continue paying the monthly maintenance fee for up to three months following the vacation of the unit. Prior to the June 25 Senate committee hearing ORANJ was contacted by AARP, which opposed the continued maintenance fee. President Ron Whalin discussed this issue with AARP and said that ORANJ would support removing the amendment from the Assembly bill and also would not support its inclusion in the Senate bill. At the June 25 hearing both PPAG and LeadingAge NJ lobbied for the provision. The sponsors of both the Assembly and Senate bills agreed with AARP and ORANJ, and the provision for continued monthly payments was not adopted.

ORANJ owes a big thank you to Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling, Assemblywoman Joann Downey and Assemblywoman Nancy Munos for sponsoring this bill and guiding the effort carefully through the political web in Trenton. In the Senate, we are very grateful to Senator Kip Bateman for allowing ORANJ to have immediate access and a great deal of his valuable time to meet with him and his staff and for allowing us to craft important changes to his original bill. Getting this bill to the Governor's desk in a timely manner was an outstanding effort on the part of these key legislators.

Special thanks go to Tom Little, Deputy Chief of Staff/Legislative Director for the 11th District assemblypersons, for keeping ORANJ fully informed on the details of the process. He was always available when we needed him and had the answers to the myriad of questions we asked. Hats off to this guy!

Veterans Property Tax Deduction

Regarding the property tax exemption bills for veterans living in CCRCs, identical bills have been introduced in every legislative session for over a decade. Some light might be at the end of the long tunnel through the efforts of Senator Vin Gopal, a recently elected legislator from the 11st District, who introduced new legislation as Senate Bill 1331 early this year. It was voted out of committee in May.

The bill proposes a constitutional amendment to extend eligibility to qualifying veterans or spouses of deceased veterans for a property tax deduction for those living in CCRCs. The proposed constitutional amendment will not become operative until approval by the voters of the state in a forthcoming election.

Those eligible under the current public law forfeited this deduction when they moved into a CCRC because they do not hold legal title to the property. To correct this omission as it pertains to occupants of CCRCs, the proposed legislation states, "For the purpose of establishing a claim, a resident of a continuing care retirement community shall be deemed the owner of legal title to the share of the taxable value of the real property of the continuing care retirement community that is attributable to the unit that the resident occupies."

The Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee convened on May 31 to hear Senate Bill 1331. Gary was able to join with Senator Gopal, the bill's sponsor, to testify in support of the bill. The bill received a unanimous vote of approval and has been reported to the Senate Budget Committee for review.

On June 14 the Assembly State and Local Government Committee voted unanimously to move Assembly Bill 3163 out of committee. Supporting the bill at the committee hearing was a large contingent of ORANJ Executive Committee members and veterans who are members of our ORANJ community. Without question, this kind of effort has a very strong impact on legislative committee members hearing the bill. They understand that ORANJ stands up for our veterans and cares about this issue.

Gary Baldwin

NORTHWEST REGION PRESIDENTS MEETING

Four of the five CCRC Association presidents and I met at The House of The Good Shepherd in Hackettstown on May 23. Our host, Tarcila Sutterley, and the CEO of The House, Deborah Beards, made sure we were well cared for during our three hours together, which included a very healthy and tasty meal. Our meeting was an energetic and focused time for sharing each one's experiences as a resident as well as being an elected leader within their communities. In addition to Tarcila, the others present were Beverly DeLaney from Crane's Mill in West Caldwell, Carolyn Krause from Cedar Crest in Pompton Plains and Simone O'Keefe from The Oaks at Denville. My wife and I rounded out the group.

Each community has a distinctive history. Three were initiated by church bodies.

Two are owned or managed by a corporate entity specializing in continuing care retirement communities; Erickson Living (Cedar Crest) and Springpoint (The Oaks). Two are owned and managed by Christian Church Denominations; Episcopal (The House of the Good Shepherd) and Lutheran (Crane's Mill). The total resident census range is from 141 at The House to 1809 at Cedar Crest. Midway are The Oaks at 349 and Crane's Mill with 375. Note: these figures are approximate and reflect the total number of available units or beds at a given time. CCRC census figures are in flux, especially in the skilled care and dementia sections.

Each has experienced similar challenges, notwithstanding size, resources, governance, or type of management. The topics of greatest interest dealt with how concerns of residents are

identified and addressed; how to assure effective working relationships between the resident association boards or advisory councils and the management; how to adapt to the changing constituency of independent living and the need for greater assistance; the proven value of communication and resident satisfaction. Ideas and materials were swapped and highlighted as each of these and other interests were identified.

The presidents expressed gratitude for ORANJ. The educational materials, research, the plenary meetings, and advocacy for residents are highly

respected. They agreed unanimously to meeting together as presidents regularly. They also suggested ways in which regional RAC/RAC members with similar interests may gather during the plenary meetings.



Tarcila Sutterley, Carolyn Krause, Simone O'Keefe, Harvey Peters and Beverly DeLaney.

It was gratifying to watch and listen to these people who are committed to serving fellow residents through their resident associations. The combination of wisdom, mutual support and laughter, fit the bill.

Harvey S. Peters ORANJ Northwest Region VP

Save the Date

ORANJ Plenary Meeting

October 17, 2018

Crestwood Manor

STONEBRIDGE BUS IN SPIRIT

from the Stonebridge newsletter, *Views From the Bridge*

On Saturday, March 24, when the March for Our Lives buses brought people of all ages to countless towns and cities, a group of 60 or so of our residents were filling their own "Stonebridge Bus in Spirit," created by arranging two long rows of two seats, bus style, in the auditorium.

They held signs, prepared in advance in the Art Room by a group of volunteers that declared solidarity with the young people who organized the marches. The messages included:

Seniors for Juniors March

Kids Yes, Guns No

Ban Guns Now, We Can't Wait

One of the organizers, Barbara Wright, explained what motivated the effort, "Our children and grandchildren were marching for gun reform. We care and decided we too can organize, however we can't march."

The assembled grip on the "in spirit" bus and around it wrote to their senators and congressmen to indicate support for the young people's commitment to banning assault weapons and for school safety.

The program also included the reading by David Mulford of the poem "Revolver," a recently discovered poem by Carl Sandburg, and a message of support from Congressman Leonard Lance, presented by Frank Riley. The signs remained on display over the weekend in the living room to signal an appreciation of the young people's leadership and the need for continued effort for the important issues addressed by the March.



A Revolver

by Carl Sandburg

Here is a revolver.

It has an amazing language all its own.

It delivers unmistakable ultimatums.

It is the last word

A simple, little human forefinger can tell a terrible story with it

Hunger, fear, revenge, robbery hide behind it.

It is the claw of the jungle made quick and powerful.

It is the dub of the savage turned to magnificent precision

It is more rapid than any judge or court of law.

It is less subtle and treacherous than any one lawyer or ten.

When it has spoken, the case can not be appealed to the supreme court, nor made mandamus nor any injunction or any stay of execution come in and interfere with the original purpose.

And nothing in human philosophy persists more strangely than the old belief that God is always on the side of those who have the most revolvers.