

Legislative Committee Report for ORANJ Plenary, April 20, 2016

The Legislative Committee has at its current focus preparation of a bill on CCRC refundable contracts for introduction into the New Jersey legislature. Existing CCRC contracts differ and the purpose of this bill is to regulate these refundable contracts. A first-in first-out (FIFO) contract similar to that now used by Erickson is being considered. This seems more acceptable than contracts in which refunds are made only after the refundable unit has been re-occupied. In addition, a maximum time for refund of two years from when the unit is available for occupancy is also proposed. The Finance Committee has prepared a survey soon to be distributed regarding resident experience with existing refundable contracts.

Having informed the Executive Committee of the poorly advertised but worthwhile Yellow Dot program, the Legislative Committee is following this effort but no longer actively pursuing implementation. One of the plenary speakers is scheduled to describe this program.

ORANJ has not taken a position on the pending Death With Dignity bill but continues to monitor its progress through the legislature.

The Veterans Exemption bills have been re-introduced in both bodies of the current legislature as S-514 and A-1481. Neither bill has as yet been posted for discussion and vote in their respective legislative committee. In previous legislative sessions identical bills have been unopposed during committee voting; however, the budget committee is presumed to have stopped the movement of the bill(s) in years past because of the financial impact on the State Budget. A new survey is being conducted by ORANJ to obtain a current estimate of the number of Independent Living units within the CCRCs across the state that are occupied by veterans or spouses of deceased veterans. The last survey was conducted in 2008 and the current survey will provide a more realistic estimate of the financial impact of this legislation. All ORANJ Independent Living residents who are veterans or spouses of deceased veterans should verify with their RAC presidents that they have been included in this survey.

Seniors are bombarded with fraudulent offers. The Legislative Committee has not identified any possible additional State law to address this problem but maintains contact with DCA on current activity. Fraud will be addressed by one of the plenary speakers.

The Committee continues to follow bills before the State legislature of interest to CCRC residents. S182 requires refundable payment within one year of availability for a new occupant. ORANJ had no role in this bill, has no knowledge of its origin, and the Legislative Committee believes that it will probably die. We will proceed with drafting our own bill. S2872 and A4635 require that the DCA display the Ombudsman's phone number for complaints in large print at a conspicuous place. The DCA has already issued a CCRC Bill of Rights document given to all residents on entry with this information included.

Relatively few CCRC residents are active in ORANJ. The Legislative Committee meets every two or three months. We welcome new members and are especially in need of someone with background in law.