



Campaign for Oregon's Seniors & People with Disabilities Legislative Action Day May 6, 2009

With a multi-billion budget shortfall and economic crisis fueled by growing unemployment, state lawmakers and residents face tough times and decisions. But about 125 volunteer advocates adorned in yellow scarves from dozens of organizations that make up the Campaign for Oregon's Seniors & People with Disabilities traveled to the Capitol in Salem on May 6 to urge bold leadership and a balanced approach.

Our message was that there is a path to protect vital, cost-effective state services like Oregon's home and community-based long-term care system and maintain and create jobs, keeping Oregon working. Besides serving Oregon's most vulnerable and their families, Oregon's long-term care system is an economic engine. It generates hundreds of millions in federal matching funds, saves taxpayer dollars, protects and creates jobs, and stimulates our economy.

The day's activities began at the Mission Mill Museum with a brief panel discussion about the innovative history and current status of Oregon's long-term care system with special remarks from Reps. Andy Olson (R-Albany) and Michael Dembrow (D-Portland). At the Capitol, attendees then had a chance to observe sessions in the House and Senate galleries before heading to smaller group discussions with House Speaker Dave Hunt (D-Clackamas County) and senior champions Rep. Jean Cowan (D-Newport) and Sen. Bill Morrisette (D-Springfield). Attendees then met with Ways & Means Committee members and their legislators in smaller district delegations or staffed interactive and informational displays in the Capitol's Galleria. The day ended with visits to individual legislators to hand deliver postcards from Campaign supporters all over the state.

Our presence on May 6 made an impact—thanks to all who participated!



"I've always heard our legislators say that we need to make them accountable and by showing up as a large group, being in the gallery, watching a legislative session, and meeting with legislators, I think it sends a message to state leaders that we do care and that they need to work with us on programs for seniors."

Marilyn Patton, Governor's
Commission on Senior Services
Canby, OR



"As a retired RN, and having recently worked as a Resident Care Manager, I have a very strong interest in seniors. Additionally, I have a partial disability, which provides me with a much better feeling of some of the frustrations of aging and disabled citizens, who strive to maintain their self respect and dignity, yet need some assistance. I plan to continue as an advocate, in some manner in this arena."

David Handler, AARP
Oregon Citizen Advocate
Netarts, OR

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In addition to the “on the ground” Legislative Action Day, the Campaign has been busy traveling the state urging Oregonians to do what they can to help preserve our groundbreaking and cost-effective long-term care system. Some of our early activity includes:

- 1,100 individuals attending seven community forums in Portland, Salem, Medford, Coos Bay, Eugene, Bend, and Pendleton and over 5,000 Oregonians calling in to a first-ever telephone town hall, providing valuable information about long-term care and caregiving options, resources and issues.
- Thousands (nearly 3,000 at last count) of Oregonians reaching out virtually to their lawmakers, e-mailing or calling them to share their personal stories and urging them to preserve Oregon’s home and community-based model of long-term care.
- More than 250 caregivers, seniors and people with disabilities hand-writing personal postcards to their elected officials about the importance of services to seniors and people with disabilities.



Rep. Ron Maurer (R-Grants Pass) talks with some southern Oregon constituents about the Campaign’s 2009 legislative priorities.

To see more photos from our day at the Capitol go to:

www.flickr.com/photos/38309232@N04/

“I think our state leaders heard that the state of Oregon can’t afford to reduce its funding of its long term care system. Our legislators need to make long term care a funding priority as it provides jobs, care options and choices for its elders, and will bring into the state a large federal match for its budget.”

Jim Barta, Long-Term Care Administrator
Eugene, OR



Volunteer advocates hear directly from House Speaker Dave Hunt (D-Clackamas County) and discuss the state’s economic crisis and services for seniors and people with disabilities.



It’s not too late to tell Oregon’s leaders that long-term care matters to you and your family! Contact the Campaign for Oregon’s Seniors and People with Disabilities to learn what you can do to help fulfill Oregon’s promise of independence, choice and dignity today.

www.oregonspromise.org

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