



In Conversation with Bill Benson: The State of Elder Justice

THE WEBINAR WILL BEGIN SHORTLY...



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Bill Benson



Benson is President of Health Benefits ABCs. He has spent over 40 years advocating for older Americans, including senior leadership positions in California, the U.S. Congress and U.S. Administration on Aging. Benson played a major role in the 1987 and 1992 amendments to the Older Americans Act, the OBRA nursing home reform legislation, many Medicare and Medicaid provisions, the Elder Justice Act, and other notable legislative initiatives. He serves as the public policy advisor to the National Adult Protective Services Association and American Association of Service Administrators.

He chairs the ASA Public Policy Committee.

Lisa Nerenberg



Lisa Nerenberg is the Executive Director of CEJC.

She has worked in the field of aging and elder abuse prevention for over 30 years as the founding director of the San Francisco Consortium for Elder Abuse Prevention, a consultant to local, state, national, and international organizations; and an instructor at City College of San Francisco.

She has testified before Congressional committees, served on governmental advisory committees, and written extensively about elder abuse and related issues. She is the author of the upcoming book, Elder Justice, Ageism and Elder Abuse (Springer, 2019).

OTUS' 2020 Budget



- Social Services Block Grants (SSBG)
- Cuts to LTC Ombudsman (\$1 million)
- Elder Justice Act (\$2 million)
- Flat funding to OAA programs
- Capping of Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) at \$2.3 billion

Other threats

- Deregulation
- Hollowing out of civil rights units

State vs Federal Advocacy

States

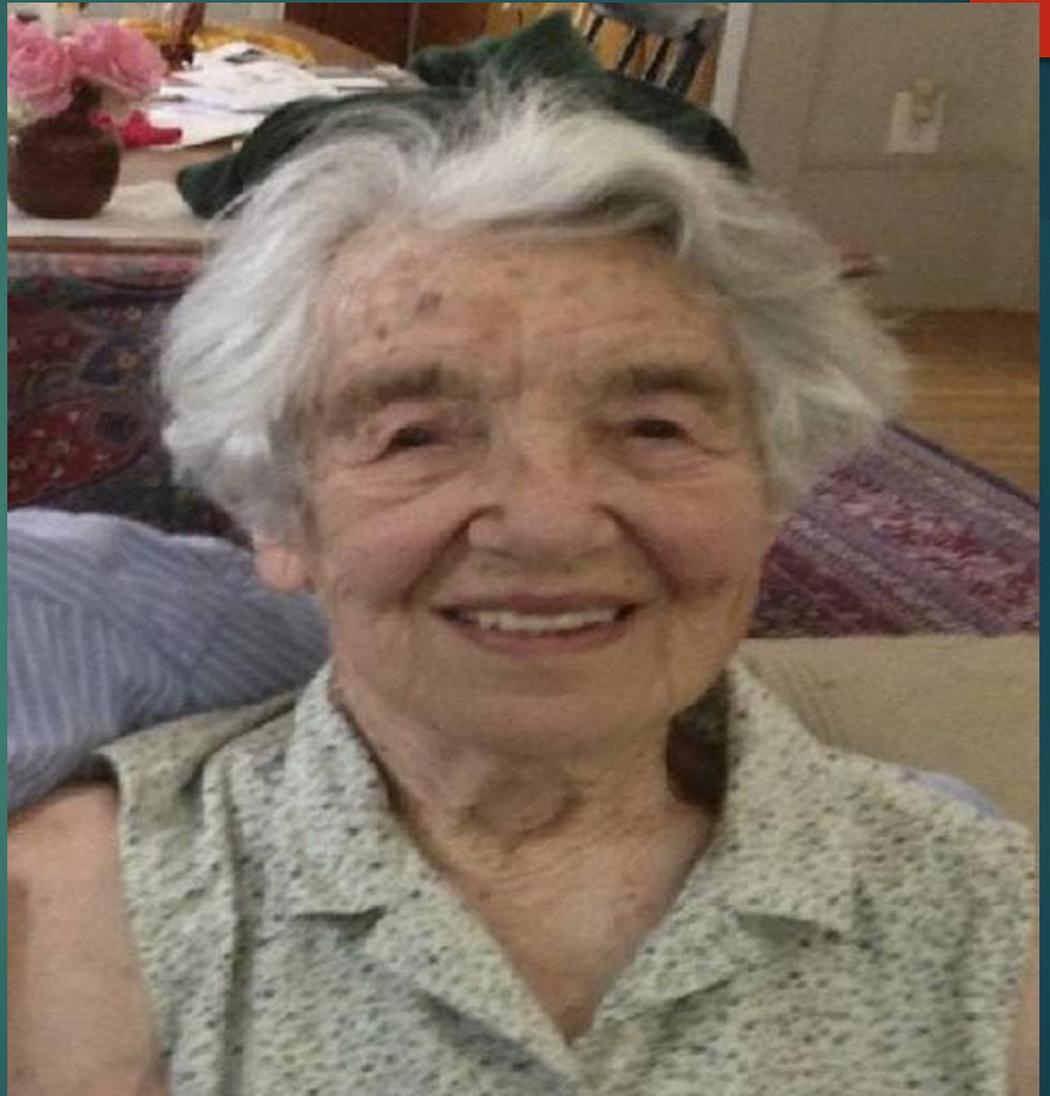
- More transparency: “strikethrough language” and public testimony

Federal

- Fewer hearings and witnesses; more scripted
- Fewer freestanding bills; more “bundling” and omnibus bills
- More unfunded bills

dedicated to **Emma
Winterman**, CRLA Senior
Lobbyist, died Jan 2014
age 98

*Bill, you
don't amend
a bad bill,
you kill a bad
bill!"*



The Advocacy Imperative: Step up!

“The unique language of the Older Americans Act (OAA) explicitly requiring advocacy by the aging network at the federal, state, and local levels. If staff have not read the OAA, they are less likely to engage in the advocacy the OAA envisions and promises.”

- Bill Benson

Older Americans Act

OAA of 1965 mandated for aging network to serve as "effective and visible" advocates on behalf of older Americans (E&VA) at all levels:

- Assistant Secretary shall (1) "serve as E&VA within DHHS and other federal departments..."
- Director of Office of Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) will "serve as an E&VA on behalf of ..."
- Director of Office of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian (AIANNH) will "serve as the E&VA on behalf of older individuals who are Native Americans..."
- State Units on Aging (SUAs) to "serve as an effective and visible advocate for older individuals by reviewing and commenting upon all State plans, budgets, and policies which affect older individuals and providing technical assistance to any agency, organization, association, or individual representing the needs of older individuals" (OAA Sec. 305(a)(1)(D))
- Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to "serve as the advocate and focal point for older individuals within the community by (in cooperation with agencies, organizations, and individuals participating in activities under the plan) monitoring, evaluating, and commenting upon all policies, programs, hearings, levies, and community actions which will affect older individuals" (OAA Sec. 306(a)(6)(B))

Origins of Elder Justice

*National Paralegal Institute & AoA-funded Bi-Regional Advocacy Assistance Offices

Advocacy Assistance & Civil Rights Office (AACRO)
at California Department of Aging – Legal Services
Developer & LTCOP

HICAP/SHIP Programs

OAA Title VII

Federal Elder Abuse Legislation (i.e., EJA)

Future of the Elder Justice Act

- The Elder Justice Act and the Affordable Care Act – Shotgun Marriage?
- Elder Justice Act resulted in too little funding for APS
- Reauthorize Elder Justice Act?

What's needed

- Partnerships & Relationship building
- Advocacy
- Education
- Coalitions with programs across the lifespan
- Involvement at all levels "SPEAK LOUDLY AND OFTEN"

National Network of State Elder Justice Coalitions (NNSEJC)

- To help statewide elder justice coalitions with multiple professional constituencies attain their common goals
- To collect and make available innovative models and strategic approaches to strengthen members' capacity and program efforts
- To generate networking opportunities for state elder justice coalitions
- To assist new multidisciplinary state elder justice projects to develop broad-based, sustainable coalitions

Questions and Answers

- Please use the “Q & A” feature on your screen rather than the ‘chat’ feature to type in a question.

Upcoming Events

CEJA Advocates Academy Webinars

August 22, 2019, 11:00 AM PST: **State ID Theft Coalitions: Stolen Identities and Beyond**

August 23, 2019, 11:00 AM PST: **Reforming Adult Guardianship Through Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS)**

For more information and registration will be available on CEJC's website soon.

2019 Conference, New Orleans

August 15, 2019, 10:00-11:30 AM: **State Elder Justice Coalitions in the Driver's Seat: Advancing Public Policy Together**

This symposium will examine the experiences of state elder justice coalitions in enacting public policy to protect elders from mistreatment. We will highlight coalitions' histories, auspices, and governance. Leaders from four states will present examples of policy platforms and initiatives, examining achievements and roadblocks. They will address common themes with recommendations for strengthening state coalitions.

August 16, 2019, 5:15-6:00 PM: **Peer Group for State EJ Coalitions**

Recently enacted and proposed retrenchments in safety net services and protections against elder mistreatment are prompting advocates in diverse fields to supercharge efforts to protect older Americans' rights, autonomy, independence, health and dignity. Elder justice coalitions provide a framework for exploring these connections and crafting cohesive, comprehensive public policy solutions. This peer group will provide an opportunity to share strategies and identify needs for new or improved policy, coordination, information and resources; and identify opportunities for working collectively.

ASA 2019 Conference, Denver

August 19-21

August 22: Annual Summit on Elder Financial Exploitation

Contact Us

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Send a message to us on our website:

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Thank You!

- Thank you for attending this webinar hosted by the California Elder Justice Coalition's National Advocates Academy. Funding for this webinar was provided by the Huguette Clark Family Fund for the Protection of Elders.
- The recording of this webinar will be posted as soon as possible on the CEJC website. We hope you will join us for future webinars in this series.
- We hope that you will consider joining us in our efforts by becoming a member of CEJC or by making a donation to support the Coalition.