

Immediate Release

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U.S. SENATE DECLARES NATIONAL DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS RECOGNITION WEEK

Resolution highlights service of direct support workforce the week of September 12, 2010

Alexandria, VA, June 28 – In a show of bipartisan support, and for the third consecutive year, the U.S. Senate unanimously approved a resolution designating the week beginning September 12 as “National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week.” Sponsored by Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE), Senate Resolution 558 recognizes Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) for their commitment to supporting individuals and promoting community-inclusion for individuals with disabilities of all ages. Senator Nelson was joined by Senators Kerry (D-MA), Brownback (R-KS), Dodd (D-CT), Bingaman (D-NM), Johanns (R-NE), Collins (R-ME), Bunning (R-KY), Carper (D-DE), Brown (D-OH) and Udall (D-CO) as co-sponsors of the bill.

“Direct support professionals provide an invaluable service to the millions of Americans living with disabilities. I’m proud to honor these hard-working individuals who give so much to help those in need. Their dedication to service is an example to us all,” said Senator Nelson.

DSPs are the people who work as direct care workers, in-home support workers, personal assistants and attendants to ensure that people with disabilities are able to live more independently and in community settings. However, low wages coupled with difficult work often leads to high turnover of DSPs. The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) projects that one million new DSPs will be needed by 2016. Of those, 38 percent (388,538) will be for personal and home care aide positions, which is the category where DSP positions are most often included.

“We are proud that the U.S. Senate has bestowed this recognition in honor and observation of the direct support workforce and the tremendous impact they have in communities across the country,” said Renee Pietrangelo, CEO of the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR). “The DSP workforce deserves our highest praise and respect for the critical services they provide daily. They are vital the fabric of our communities and the need for the quality supports provided by DSPs continues to grow at an alarming rate.

This acknowledgment by the Senate is significant to the ANCOR National Advocacy Campaign (NAC) as work continues to secure increased funding for DSPs and improve supports and services for people with disabilities. The Resolution passed by the Senate identifies the critical role DSPs perform in assisting individuals with disabilities of all ages to remain connected to their families and communities. “July marks the 20th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provides another reason to celebrate the contributions of DSPs,” said Renee Pietrangelo, ANCOR CEO. Today our federal and state policies, in keeping with the 1999 U.S. Supreme Court Olmstead Decision, assert the right of individuals to live in their homes and communities.

National Direct Support Professional Recognition Week is celebrated annually across the country with special events and ceremonies earmarked to honor the tens of thousands of workers who enable our most fragile citizens and their families to live healthy community-oriented lives. “No matter the nomenclature,” says Pietrangelo, “whether they are known as direct support professionals, direct care workers or direct service staff, National Direct Support Professional Recognition Week is a significant and very public way to demonstrate gratitude for what direct support professionals unselfishly do for so many.”

About ANCOR

The [American Network of Community Options and Resources](#) is a national association representing more than 850 private providers of community living and employment supports and services to more than 400,000 individuals with disabilities. As a nonprofit organization, ANCOR successfully addresses the needs and interests of private providers, which employ nearly a half million DSPs, before Congress and federal agencies, continually advocating for the crucial role private providers play in enhancing and supporting the lives of people with disabilities and their families. Through the [National Advocacy Campaign](#), ANCOR seeks to obtain the resources to recruit, train and retain a sustainable direct support workforce.

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