

# NCCO State Representation Form



<b>STATE</b> ___Oregon___ <b>State Representative</b>	
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<b>State Representative's Organization</b>	
<b>Name: Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens, United Seniors of Oregon</b>	<b>PH: 503-720-4908</b>
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<b>Describe your organizational purpose, what current &amp; past senior/aging issues are being addressed in your state's advocacy efforts and the benefit of being associated with NCCO:</b>	
<p>The Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens and United Seniors of Oregon are non-profit, non-partisan organizations dedicated to advocating for a good, quality of life for seniors and people with disabilities. Both OCSRC, founded in 1969, and United Seniors, founded in 1979, are recognized as major voices for seniors in Oregon. OSCRC and United Seniors of Oregon are currently the state affiliates of the National Council on Aging (NCOA) and its advocacy arm, the National Coalition of Consumer Organizations on Aging (NCCO). The State Council was affiliated with the National Council of Senior Citizens until it became our national and state partner the Alliance for Retired Americans.</p> <p>OSCRC is a true state council and United Seniors of Oregon a legislative coalition, each made up senior, disability, consumer and other social service groups (see list of partners below) dedicated to preserving and protecting the rights and services of seniors and people with disabilities. As the longest standing grassroots senior advocacy groups in the state, United Seniors and OSCRC continue to make a real difference in their advocacy for disadvantaged populations in Oregon.</p> <p>For decades OSCRC and United Seniors have been devoted to legislative and consumer issues that promote a life of opportunity, equity and dignity for Oregonians of all ages. As an advocacy organization dedicated to persons 60+ in Oregon, OSCRC encourages seniors throughout the state to become more active on issues that affect not only seniors, but all of society. These issues include: Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, health care services, community-based long term care,, affordable prescription drugs, mental health and addiction services, consumer health care, utilities, affordable insurance rates, and crime and fraud prevention.</p> <p>OSCSC and United Seniors have had a strong presence in biennial Oregon legislative sessions since the 70s, helping win passage of legislation in senior and disability services, taxation, nursing home reform, physical and mental health care, managed health care patient rights, low-income housing, and consumer utility issues. Many of these victories were their key role in the development of statewide coalitions, including Advocacy</p>	

Coalition of Seniors and People with Disabilities, Oregon Health Action Campaign, Campaign for Patient Rights, Medicare/Medicaid Coalition, and many other statewide efforts.

The State Council and United Seniors have fought for and won many issues that benefit older persons and people with disabilities. They have made countless legislative inroads on behalf of seniors, consumers and disadvantaged populations, including:

- being a leader in the development and maintenance of Oregon's model community-based long term care system since its inception in 1980;
- championing services and support for seniors and people with disabilities with mental health and addiction problems and helping lead with the Governor's Commission on Senior Services the legislative fight that brought millions of dollars into senior mental health and addictions efforts statewide through the creation of the successful state senior mental health projects;
- helping lead the fights against self service gas for decades, as Oregon remains the only state not adopt that policy;
- helping lead the fight to establish the nation's first denturist program in Oregon;
- helping create the Campaign for Patient Rights, a coalition representing the rights of managed health care patients, and helping support the passage of two critical pieces of patient protection legislation;
- continuing their strong support of universal and consumer health care issue and being a founding member of the Oregon Health Action Campaign; and
- working with Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVPs) to bring state funding to create intergenerational mentoring and crime prevention programs statewide.

But these advocacy efforts have not been limited to legislative battles. Successful campaigns have been conducted to protect the low-incomes access to prescriptions drugs, fight utility rate increases and defeat attempts to cut in-home and community based long term care services. Statewide leadership was taken over the years to protect Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and the Older Americans Act, as well as efforts to protect the pension and health benefits of retired workers. On-going efforts have been made to support nursing home and adult foster home resident rights, particularly as a champion for the state Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.

Their persistence with three different Insurance Commissioners helped to open health insurance rate information to the public and allow for more consumer input through enhanced advisory bodies in the Insurance Division. They have protected the rights of managed health care consumers, seniors, people with disabilities and the low income to have access to the prescription drugs they need.

OSCRC has also sponsored educational workshops and presentations that have provided thousands of people with information on issues surrounding aging, health care, and medication management. Workshops have also been held for those interested in receiving advocacy training and skill development. Education has also been a major thrust for OSCSC since its inception. Training efforts have been held around the state, educating seniors on the major issues and services affecting older Oregonians and on how they could be more effective in representing their own concerns. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s OSCSC held local and statewide advocacy and legislative workshops around the state using foundation grants and federal CETA monies.

Early on OSCSC successfully extended their advocacy efforts to the electronic media. The State Council has produced hundreds of television and radio shows on senior-related topics, many of which have received national acclaim. During the 1970s, they sponsored a television show on Oregon Education Television entitled "Senior Citizen Today." During 1980s, OSCSC sponsored the Senior Community Video Project (directed by Tom Taylor) and the weekly cable television series Age Wise, which won national recognition, including the 1988 OWL Award and the 1989 Hometown USA Award. OSCSC worked with Blackthorne Productions to produce the documentary "Years of Change and Challenge," which received a Mature Media Merit Award and was aired on OPB.

OSCRC also has the only senior-based, grassroots political action committee in the state. Totally volunteer-based, the OSCRC PAC has endorsed hundreds of statewide and legislative candidates who have a strong record of support for seniors and people with disabilities. They have had some historic victories, including helping defeat a long time congressman with historically low career voting record for senior issues and helping bring in \$30,000 in radio ads and organizing in the senior community to assist senior advocate Ron Wyden in obtaining the senior votes he needed to win the special US Senate election, plus many examples of impact on state legislative races.