



The Beacon

A Newsletter for Long-Term Care Residents

October 2026

Surprise PNA Bill Approved by Assembly Committee

Assembly Bill A5440 would add about \$2 a month to the PNA in 2027



Legislators on the state Assembly Health Infrastructure Committee assured nursing home residents that they are open to a bigger raise in the personal needs allowance (PNA), despite voting to approve a new bill that provides only small annual increases in line with inflation.

Assembly Bill **A5440** — introduced Sept. 10 and unanimously approved by the committee on Sept. 14 — would update state law to reflect the current PNA of \$50 a month and implement annual cost-of-living increases in January. If inflation remains the same, the PNA would rise to about \$52 a month next year.

Members of NJ Nursing Home Residents United have been leading support for a separate bill (**A2691/S1576**) that would raise the monthly PNA to \$140 and set up annual cost-of-living increases. The Assembly Aging and Human Services Committee unanimously approved A2691 in May.

Four Residents United members — Gail Smith, Tanette Clegg, James Cook, and Ray DiFrancesco — testified at the Assembly Health Infrastructure Committee hearing. Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) staff members read testimony from three additional residents who could not attend in person: Gretchen Pfeffer, John D'Errico, and Crystal Cunningham.

The testimony emphasized that residents need PNA funds for shoes, clothes, hair care, phone service, toiletries, supplies for their hobbies and interests, and food to supplement or sometimes replace what the nursing home gives them. The current \$50 PNA and a promise of \$2 more in January is simply not enough.

Committee Chair Sterley S. Stanley, a primary sponsor of A5440, called the bill a starting point for discussing a PNA increase. He also told residents he wants an open dialogue to learn more about nursing home issues. Assemblyman Christopher DePhillips and Assemblywoman Shanique Speight, primary sponsors of A2691, pledged to continue working toward a larger PNA raise.

Residents United will continue leading efforts to raise the PNA to \$140 a month.
Want to get involved? Call 609-690-4740 or email community@ltco.nj.gov.



TIME TO VOTE! Registration Deadline is Oct. 13

All New Jersey registered voters may vote by mail or cast ballots in person on Election Day, Nov. 3, or during early voting, which begins Oct. 24. You should make a plan now, especially if you need transportation to vote in person.

Not sure if you are registered? Visit [VOTE.NJ.GOV](https://www.vote.nj.gov) and click *Register to Vote!* You can look up your status or learn how to register online, by mail, or in person. The deadline is **Tuesday, Oct. 13.**

More questions? Download our Election Guide at [WWW.NJ.GOV/LTCO](https://www.nj.gov/LTCO)



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Resident Voices

What's your favorite Halloween costume memory?



I always thought Halloween was more about being funny than scary. My favorite costume was the year I was a mermaid! I had a wig and fins for my hands and a suit that looked like a fish tail. – Gregory M.



I was an only child and my mother loved to dress me up. She would make all of my costumes and my most favorite was the year she made me up to be like Elizabeth Taylor. I looked like a real life movie star! – Sharon P.



I was a triplet and me and my brothers loved playing superhero. We didn't have much money but one year my Momma surprised us and we all got to be superheroes. I was Superman, one of my brothers was the Green Hornet and the littlest of us had to be Robin. – James O.