

Dear Chair Abney and honorable committee members,

Please accept this message as my testimony in support of **HR 7059**, making an appropriation of \$100,000 to the RI Office of Healthy Aging for the RI Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

I submit this both as a newly-former primary caregiver to someone with vascular dementia (who passed away in March of this year) as well as a long-time facilitator of support groups for caregivers to people with dementias and with Parkinson's Disease.

I and others in the support group have benefited greatly from the work of the Ombudsman Program. My own experience includes learning more about the program in order to inform people in the two support groups as well as hearing from group members about concrete ways in which the program benefited them and helped them take needed action in support of their loved ones in facilities.

Caregiving is complicated, exhausting, alienating and thankless work much of the time. Having an office with caring, informed, knowledgeable, effective and efficient people is a critical component of supporting those who provide care to loved ones in their own homes as well as for those whose loved ones reside in care facilities.

Not all facilities provide the level of care one would want for a family member, friend or other loved one to receive. The Ombudsman Program provides a critical means to ensuring that bad actors are called to account and in informing caregivers about useful regulations, opportunities and other needed information in order to ensure the best possible care and outcomes for our aging population.

Please support HR 7059 with this needed appropriation.

Respectfully,

Janet Isserlis  
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Providence