



**Testimony in Support of HR 7059
VIA EMAIL**

Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Natasha Milhomens, and I am part of the team with the Rhode Island State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, where I serve as an Office Assistant. I respectfully submit this written testimony in support of HR 7059.

In my role, I am often one of the first points of contact for residents, family members, and community members reaching out to our program. Many of these calls and messages come from people who are unsure of their rights, worried about speaking up, or simply don't know where else to turn.

What I hear most often is not just concern, but uncertainty.
Uncertainty about whether anyone will listen.
Uncertainty about whether anything will change.

One resident shared with us, "I didn't think anyone would come." That moment has stayed with me, because it reflects how isolating these experiences can feel and how meaningful it is when someone does respond.

That is the role of the Ombudsman Program.

Every day, our team works to ensure that residents are heard, that their concerns are taken seriously, and that they are supported in a way that respects their dignity and choices. While much of this work happens behind the scenes, it has a very real impact on people's daily lives, whether that means resolving a concern, helping someone understand their rights, or simply making sure they are not facing challenges alone.

The need for this support continues to grow. We are hearing from more residents and families, and the concerns being raised are often more complex and urgent. Adequate funding is essential to ensure that we can continue to respond in a timely way and maintain a consistent presence for those who rely on us.

The additional \$100,000 proposed in HR 7059 will help strengthen our ability to be there for residents when it matters most.

I respectfully urge your support for HR 7059.

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to Rhode Island's long-term care residents.

Respectfully submitted,

Natasha Milhomens
Office Assistant
Rhode Island State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program