



May 5, 2026

Dear Chair Abney and the Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program plays a critical and irreplaceable role in protecting the rights, dignity, and well-being of residents living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities across Rhode Island. For many residents, particularly older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals without family advocates, the Ombudsman Program is the only independent voice ensuring they are treated fairly and lawfully.

One of the most essential functions of the Ombudsman Program is its work around **involuntary transfers and evictions from long-term care facilities**. Facing a discharge or eviction can be frightening and destabilizing for a resident, often involving complex medical, emotional, and legal consequences. The Ombudsman Program helps residents and their families understand their rights, reviews whether facilities are following state and federal regulations and assists residents in navigating the **appeals process** when an eviction or transfer is improper or unsafe. This advocacy helps ensure that residents are not displaced without due process, appropriate notice, or a safe and suitable discharge plan.

Through education, mediation, and advocacy the Ombudsman Program often resolves disputes before they escalate, reducing trauma for residents and preventing unnecessary hospitalizations or homelessness. When appeals are needed, the program helps residents participate in meaningfully in that process, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected.

The need for this program continues to grow as Rhode Island's aging population increases and long-term care systems become more complex. Adequate funding is essential for the Ombudsman Program to continue responding to complaints, assisting with eviction appeals, and providing timely advocacy to some of our state's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven J. Bagian
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