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VIA EMAIL

House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
housefinance@rilegislature.gov

RE: Testimony in Support of HR 7059; ADVOCATING FUNDING FOR THE ALLIANCE for BETTER LONG TERM-CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members:

I serve as the Probate Judge for the Town of North Smithfield. I am also a practicing attorney, in good standing with the Rhode Island Bar. My practice focuses primarily on estate planning and probate matters. I am writing in strong support of HR 7059 making an appropriation of \$100,000 to the Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging for the Alliance for Better Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

The Ombudsman Program's advocacy on behalf of nursing home residents not only brings comfort and dignity to seniors and their families but also strengthens the accountability of care providers.

Having had the opportunity to work with the Rhode Island Long Term Care Ombudsman's office on numerous occasions, mostly in a pro (or low) bono capacity, I have seen the positive difference this program makes in the lives of individuals and families navigating the complexities of long-term care.

I have been inspired by the Ombudsman's staff and their unwavering commitment and passion for ensuring that nursing care residents receive the highest level of care, maintain their autonomy, and are treated with dignity. As a result of the outstanding leadership of our Rhode Island Long Term Care Ombudsman, Lori Light, our senior population has been given a voice.

With Rhode Island's demographic shifts and a growing senior population, the demand for ombudsman services continues to rise. Increased funding is essential to meet these needs, expand outreach, and maintain high standards of service. I urge you to support HR 7059 and invest in the Alliance for Better Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

As Rhode Islanders, we must ensure that our most treasured asset—our seniors, who have lived, worked, and raised families in our state—continue to have a voice, are protected, and are treated with the dignity they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

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