

Chris O'Brien

From: Tracy Carlson <tracycarlson776@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 10:51 AM
To: House Finance Committee
Cc: georgedistrict28nardone@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony in support of HR 7059

Categories: Red category

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Dear Chair Abney and honorable committee members,,

My name is Tracy Carlson, and I am writing 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 currently serve as the Vice President of the Board of the Alliance for Better Long Term Care, the nonprofit organization that houses Rhode Island's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. I am also a former long-term care nurse, and I have seen firsthand how critical it is for residents to have an independent advocate.

In my time working in long-term care, I witnessed how vulnerable residents can be, particularly when they feel unheard or unsure how to navigate concerns about their care, their living situation, or their rights. The Ombudsman Program fills a role that no other entity can—it exists solely to represent the resident, confidentially and without conflict. That trust allows residents and families to speak openly, often about issues they would not raise through formal channels.

The need for this program has not remained static. Cases today are often more complex, involving discharge notices, family conflict, and system navigation challenges that require time, skill, and consistent follow-up. Yet the state appropriation for this program has not increased in 15 years. As demand and complexity grow, flat funding effectively reduces the program's ability to meet its mandate.

Rhode Island's Ombudsman staff are responsible for an extensive and growing network of nursing homes, assisted living residences, and home care settings. Without sufficient staffing, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a consistent presence in facilities, respond promptly to complaints, and support residents who rely on this program as their only independent voice.

This program not only resolves individual concerns but also prevents larger system issues from escalating—avoiding more serious outcomes that can impact both residents and the broader healthcare system.

I respectfully urge you to support [BILL NUMBER] to ensure that the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program has the resources it needs to continue serving Rhode Island's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tracy Carlson