



March 18th, 2026

Honorable House Committee on Health and Human Services

RE: Testimony SUPPORTING HB 7928

Dear Chair and Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing in my capacity as the Rhode Island State Long Term Care Ombudsman in support of House Bill 7928, which would enable the formation of resident and family councils in assisted living residences.

My office sees firsthand the profound difference in resident and family satisfaction when a facility truly supports and embraces both resident and family councils. Facilities that foster these councils create stronger communication, better care outcomes, and a greater sense of trust and partnership between residents, families, and staff.

The decision to place a parent, spouse, sibling, or loved one in a nursing home is never easy. Long term care is complex, emotional, and often overwhelming. By the time a family reaches that point, they are already exhausted physically and emotionally from navigating a difficult system.

Resident and family councils become a lifeline. They provide a space for education, support, and advocacy. They give residents and families a voice not just individually, but collectively.

Too often, families feel isolated, as though they are the only ones facing challenges or asking difficult questions. Councils change that. They bring people together, creating a community where experiences are shared, concerns are validated, and solutions are pursued together.

We have seen families and residents support one another in meaningful ways checking in on neighbors, advocating not just for their own loved one, but for others who may not have someone present. This is especially important for residents with dementia or those who cannot speak for themselves. For many families, simply knowing that others are looking out for their loved one provides an immeasurable sense of comfort.

There is real power when residents and families come together not only to support one another, but to work collaboratively with facilities to identify concerns and improve quality of care.

**OFFICE OF THE RHODE ISLAND STATE
LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN**

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When councils are supported, everyone benefits: residents feel heard, families feel engaged, and facilities gain valuable insight that leads to better outcomes.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to Rhode Island's older adults and their families.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Light
Rhode Island State Long Term Care Ombudsman

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