

From: [Sandra Darling](#)
To: [S Legislation](#); [Sen. Lauria, Pamela J.](#); [June Speakman](#)
Subject: Senate Bill #2686
Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 8:45:50 AM

Chairwoman Murray and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

I write to you in **support** of SB #2686 which establishes the Office of the Elder Advocate within the Rhode Island state government to promote, protect, and advance the rights and well-being of older adults statewide.

Most older adults in Rhode Island live independently, and currently have no dedicated, centralized advocate when they face age discrimination, benefit denials, housing instability, or financial exploitation. SB #2686 directly addresses this gap by creating a holistic elder advocacy office that supports older adults across settings including private homes, apartments, and community-based housing.

This bill explicitly includes advocacy on issues such as financial exploitation, guardianship, and elder abuse or neglect. Financial abuse is one of the fastest-growing forms of elder mistreatment, particularly affecting older adults living alone or with cognitive decline. The Elder Advocate can receive individual complaints, help navigate systems, and elevate patterns of abuse to policymakers for action.

I urge your support on SB #2686.

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