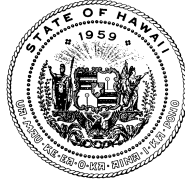


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR

BRUCE ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2337 SD2
Relating to An Appropriation for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Program**

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS
REPRESENTATIVE JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE NADINE K. NAKAMURA, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: March 13, 2020
9:00 A.M.

Room Number: 329

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health, supports SB 2337 SD2 relating to an appropriation for the Office of the Long-Term
3 Care Ombudsman Program, a program of the EOA.

4 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates an unspecified amount for fiscal year 2020-2021
5 to be expended by the Executive Office on Aging to establish ombudsman positions and
6 operating expenses.

7 **Purpose and Justification:** The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is required by federal
8 law (Title VII, Chapter 2, Section 711 of the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965, as amended
9 by Public Law 89-73) and state law (Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 349-21) to protect the
10 human and civil rights of residents in all long-term care settings. The OAA requires the Long-
11 Term Care Ombudsman to visit facilities quarterly, respond to complaints, engage in
12 investigations, provide information, assistance and referrals to long-term residents and their

1 families, facilitate family councils statewide, provide community education, and administer the
2 program.

3 The LTCOP has 1 Long-Term Care Ombudsman, 1 Volunteer Coordinator, and 1 Oahu
4 Ombudsman position that is established but needs to be filled. EOA has 3 small purchase
5 contracts with the counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui. These contractors are trained
6 Ombudsmen and have assisted to expand quarterly visits; however, they do not replace the
7 unmet needs that would be filled by full-time staff. The Institute on Medicine recommended in
8 1995 at minimum one full-time ombudsman for every two thousand residents. Hawaii has 1,727
9 total facilities with 12,889 residents statewide. Based on these statistics, EOA should have 6 full-
10 time long-term care ombudsmen.

11 Hawaii has the longest life expectancy at 81.3 years of age. The population of the state is 1.4
12 million people with 1 in 4 over 60 years of age. By 2030, the state population will increase to 1.5
13 million with 1 in 3 being over the age of 60. Long-term care residents are the most needy and
14 vulnerable elderly in our community.

15 EOA conducted a comparison of other LTCOP in states of similar size.

- 16 • Maine population of 1.3 million =13 full-time employees
- 17 • West Virginia population of 1.79 million =11 full-time employees
- 18 • New Hampshire population of 1.36 million = 5 full-time employees

19 To meet the goal of quarterly visits and to advocate for the most vulnerable residents in all care
20 settings, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman would need to conduct 28 visits a day statewide.

21 The long-term care ombudsman program requires state support to meet the needs of residents in
22 long-term care settings and to be in compliance with federal and state laws.

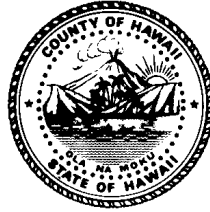
1 EOA will continue to foster our current partnerships as well as develop new partnerships in the
2 community to expand its volunteer base.

3 The Executive Office on Aging fully supports the need to expand staffing and to be in alignment
4 with state and federal laws. We look towards the future as the population continues to increase.
5 EOA through the LTCOP needs to meet its obligation to residents in all care settings.

6 **Recommendation:** The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is not part of the
7 Administration's budget request. We support funding this program provided that its enactment
8 does not reduce or replace priorities with the Administration's budget request.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Harry Kim
Mayor



Roy Takemoto
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

March 10, 2020

Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Representative Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Nakamura, and Committee Members:

RE: SB 2337, SD2 Making an Appropriation for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Please accept this testimony in support of the intent and purpose of SB 2337, SD2, dealing with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

It seems clear that Oahu has been grossly underserved, and the neighbor islands almost totally neglected, by virtue of inadequate funding for this program. With our senior population growing daily, it is unacceptable for this situation to continue, now that it has been brought to your attention.

Please approve SB 2337 with a reasonable allocation of resources and an early effective date. It ought to become part of your base budget as well.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Kim
MAYOR



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facebook.com/AARPHawaii

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Friday, March 13, 2020
9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329

To: Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Chair

RE: SB 2337 SD2 RELATING TO AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE OFFICE OF LTC OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Nakamura, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a membership organization of people age fifty and over, with nearly 145,000 members in Hawai'i. AARP advocates for issues that matter to Hawai'i families, including the high cost of long-term care; access to affordable, quality health care for all generations; and serving as a reliable information source on issues critical to people over the age of fifty.

SB 2337 SD2 appropriates funding to the office of Long Term Care Ombudsman to establish full time equivalent ombudsman specialists for the counties of Oahu, Hawaii, Kauai and Maui.

AARP strongly supports SB 2337 SD2. This office is greatly understaffed to respond and investigate complaints and concerns of long term residents who reside in Hawaii's long term care facilities. There is currently one ombudsman and nine ombudsman volunteers responsible to visit residents in Hawaii's 1,696 facilities, which include adult residential care homes, foster care homes, assisted living and nursing homes, caring for over 12,000 residents.

The requested appropriation provides the necessary funding to hire additional ombudsman specialists in each county who can address our vulnerable residents' needs and concerns in the most expedient manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2337 SD2.





HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2020

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Rep. Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair

Rep. Della Au Belatti Rep. Calvin K.Y. Say
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi Rep. James Kunane Tokioka
Rep. John M. Mizuno Rep. Gene Ward

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Friday, March 13, 2020
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 329
 State Capitol
 415 South Beretania Street

*Testimony of John G. McDermott, LSW, ACSW, M.Div.
State Long-Term Care Ombudsman*

In strong support of SB2337, SD2

Purpose of SB2337, SD2: To appropriate funds to the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman for five full-time (5.0 FTE) permanent ombudsman specialist positions; one on Kauai, one on Oahu, one on Maui and two on Hawaii (Hilo and Kona sides).

Good morning, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Nakamura and members of the Committee.

My name is John G. McDermott and I have been the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (SLTCO) since August, 1998.

In 1978 the Older Americans Act (OAA) required all states have an Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. In 1979 HRS 349 was amended to conform with federal law.

The National Institute of Medicine’s 1995 report, “Real People, Real Problems: An Evaluation of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs of the Older Americans Act recommended **at a minimum** 1 FTE ombudsman per 2,000 residents.

- Hawaii has 1 FTE ombudsman per 12,889 residents.

- National average is 1 ombudsman to 2,208 beds.

This study was done at a time when most residents were in nursing homes. Today's residents live in many more types of facilities (Adult Residential Care Homes, Assisted Living Facilities, Community Care Foster Family Homes) and in Hawaii they are spread over 6 different islands, so the logistics are more complicated than in 1995 and require greater staffing and funding.

The OAA mandates all residents ***"have regular and timely access to the LTCOP services."*** AOA/Administration on Community Living (ACL) interprets this as "every resident, at a minimum, should be visited quarterly." Our **12,889** long-term care residents live in **1,727** facilities. A quarterly visit means I need to visit **28.78 facilities/day!**

Kauai has 5 NHs w/333 beds, 1 AL w/100 beds, 21 CCFFHs w/48 beds and 6 ARCHs w/26 beds so **33 LTC facilities with 507 beds.**

Maui has 4 NHs w/ 459 beds, 1 AL w/ 144 beds, 59 CCFFHs w/150 beds and 12 ARCHs w/72 beds so **76 LTC facilities with 825 beds.**

Hawaii has 8 NHs w/870 beds, 1 AL w/220 beds, 125 CCFFHs w/339 beds and 42 ARCHs w/190 beds so **176 LTC facilities with 1,619 beds.**

Oahu has 30 NHs w/2,830 beds, 15 ALFs w/2,379 beds, 1,024 CCFFHs w/2,616 beds and 373 ARCHs w/2,113 beds so **1,442 LTC facilities with 9,938 LTC beds.**

Travel to a Neighbor Island includes airfare + car rental + airport parking + per diem. As an example: on January 22nd of this year, the average cost would be \$150 + \$60 + \$18 + \$20 = \$248/trip.

Since airlines require passengers arrive at least one hour before departure – and factoring in the time flying, time picking up the rental car, time driving to the facilities – I have just wasted 2 hours there and two hours back so *only 4 hours left to visit* with the residents.

The time and cost involved clearly demonstrates its much more effective to have "local" ombudsmen who live on the Neighbor Islands, know the people and the community, can be available for evenings or weekend investigations, family councils, senior fairs, recruiting volunteers, working with the local media, County Councils and local Area Agencies on Aging.

Some are proposing that we continue *contracting* out these positions and not increase the size of state government and associated liabilities. I think that's unfair to the Neighbor Islands and reflects a Honolulu-centric mentality that many find insulting and demeaning – myself included.

Neighbor Island residents pay the same federal and state taxes as Oahu, yet they have never had the same “*regular and timely access to services*” provided by the LTCOP. It’s unfair.

A quick review of our 2017 contractor experience: After receiving permission to post the contracts and get the word out by various e-mail list-serves, we received only ONE application for Kauai, ONE application for Maui, ONE application for Hilo and after many more months ... ONE application for Kona. Disappointing but not a surprise. With Hawaii’s high cost of living, young people need full-time jobs, with benefits. The labor market in Hawaii is very tight so lots of competition for these workers. All our applicants were recent retirees who knew of the LTCOP and wanted to help but discovered this type of advocacy within long-term care facilities was much more emotionally and physically draining than they had expected.

These contractors were all part of the *sandwich generation*... some taking care of parents AND children starting lives of their own. Our Kauai contractor had to quit 2/7/20 after her one-year commitment to care for multiple family members. I won’t give all the details but her plate was FULL and so she had to move on. On Kauai we contracted with the Kauai Agency on Elderly Affairs after receiving no applications.

Our Maui contractor was previously an ombudsman volunteer for 7 years so no learning curve there. We were happy he applied for the position and he was happy to finally get some money (we don’t even have funding to reimburse our volunteers for their gas mileage to the facilities). Unfortunately, he is now having some health issues and may also need to step down.

Our Hilo contractor worked as Director of Social Services at several nursing homes so she also had no real learning curve (although we did have to address any potential conflicts of interest) but after hiring her, she informed us she could no longer do the amount of walking required for this job due to a leg injury.

We then contracted with the Hawaii Office on Aging so we wouldn’t lose the money. We got lucky. They connected us to a DOH public health nurse practitioner who had just retired after 40 years and wanted to help the LTCOP after unexpectedly losing her husband and needing something productive to do during this transition period. She is often good-naturedly asking if we have found her replacement yet because she is now ready to move on as well.

Every organization I know of has had problems finding workers on the Kona side. We finally had an applicant who had recently retired to Waikoloa from the Mainland and wanted to get to know Hawaii’s people and history through the Ombudsman position. She was very good but decided Waikoloa was more expensive than she had budgeted and left us to work full-time.

Our contractors made a MAJOR difference. For the first time since 1978 when the LTCOP was established, EVERY facility on the Neighbor Islands received quarterly visits by the ombudsman

(and monthly on Kauai). We resolved most of the residents' complaints and learned of several systemic problems we need to address with the Department of Health. But contractors take a long time to find, and train, and when the contract is pau, we must do this all over again. It's not fair to the Neighbor Islands kupuna. In this kind of work, you get better over time. You need the cumulative experience to work with people in a crisis. I need 5 FTEs who will make the commitment to be there for 25 years like I did.

Others ask why we don't consider using volunteers? Been there, done that. I created the Volunteer Coordinator position back in 2001 with the support of the Legislature. Since then we have certified almost 250 volunteers. These folks are carefully screened. We provide 20 hours of classroom training and 8 hours of on-site training, one-on-one with me. We ask for a one-year commitment (many have given us years!) and that we all meet as a group monthly, so everyone stays on the same page and we learn from one another by discussing cases and having guest speakers. We currently have 21 wonderful volunteers but most of our volunteers only want to be assigned to ONE facility so I would need 1,727 volunteers to cover all our facilities.

It's much easier to recruit volunteers to clean a beach *for a day*, build a house *for a day*, count whales *for a day*. A quick assignment, folks feel good about what they did, and it's over. That's not the LTCOP. This is a commitment of one year to make weekly visits to talk story with the residents, listen to their concerns and problems, then work on solutions with administration. Sometimes successful, but not always. Vulnerable seniors with dementia or other limitations don't call my office. Many don't have a phone. They don't know what "ombudsman" means. You must go to the facility and face-to-face engage with the residents until they trust you and open up about their concerns. There is always the fear of retaliation so the weekly visits to follow up and make sure the residents are still safe after voicing concerns is critical.

As to another criticism why we don't "partner" with other organizations, I can provide a very long list to prove that we have and will continue to partner with anyone interested in protecting our kupuna.

We appreciate our volunteers and our contractors, but they are NOT a substitute for FTE permanent staff. One FTE Ombudsman for the entire State doesn't work. Our young people are moving away. It's too expensive to live here. Affordable housing is nonexistent. For the kupuna who decide to stay behind, the *extended ohana* are no longer available to help them, support them, protect them. Our ombudsmen help fill in for that loss. Residents know what they tell the ombudsman is confidential and that the ombudsman will visit again on a regular basis so if their situation deteriorates, the ombudsman will be there to advocate on their behalf.

Variations of companion bills HB1872 and SB2337 have been introduced multiple times before without success, but with the growing numbers of Hawaii seniors needing long-term care placement, *it has never been more important than now to pass these bills.*

The LTCOP tries to protect our most vulnerable, and often hidden from sight, kupuna. The LTCOP should not be confused with Adult Protective Services or the Department of Health's Office of Health Care Assurance (the licensing agency). APS only investigates cases of abuse or neglect and they have a screening process to weed out callers. DOH focuses mostly on annual inspections and then they are gone. Yes, they also investigate complaints but only the LTCOP is there to *pro-actively* prevent problems; to work with residents, family and staff to make the facility better; to provide support and protection to the residents, as well as to investigate complaints and address concerns by visiting at least once a quarter.

Please support SB2337, SD2 so we can better protect our seniors who are responsible for everything we have and love about Hawaii. Mahalo.

Mahalo for giving me this opportunity to testify.



Hawaii's Long Term Care Residents

12,889 LTC residents statewide

(1/23/20)

- **47** Nursing Homes (4,492 beds)
- **433** Adult Residential Care Homes (ARCH), Expanded, type I and II (2,401 beds)
- **18** Assisted Living Facilities (2,843 beds)
- **1,229** Community Care Foster Family Homes (3,153 beds)

...Total community beds 8,397

Total: **1,727** Facilities ... 60 days/quarter = 28.78/day!!

12

Federal funding for the LTCOP is based on senior population. 12 states receive the same federal funding as Hawaii. The difference is what they receive as additional funding from their Legislatures.

FY2018 Federal Funding Title VII

Ombudsman/Elder Abuse



Based on *Senior* Population – **OMB \$84,052 + EA \$23,710 = \$107,762**

Alaska Delaware District of Columbia Hawaii

Idaho Maine Montana New Hampshire North Dakota

Rhode Island South Dakota Vermont Wyoming

23

In 2017 the LTCOP received an additional \$157,168 for 3 part-time contractors and restoration of the F/T Oahu position. Without that additional amount, funding would only be \$176,850.

FY2018 State / Local / Total Ombudsman Funding

Alaska \$497,679 state / \$731,241 total funding
 Delaware \$384,013 state / \$824,784 total funding
 D.C. \$383,252 state / \$562,602 total funding
Hawaii \$102,942 state / \$257,642 total funding
 (2017 \$176,850 w/out contractors)
 Idaho \$312,443 state / \$652,226 total funding
 Maine \$756,033 state / \$1,203,544 total funding
 Montana \$536,202 state + \$212,932 LF / \$1,189,171 total funding
 New Hampshire \$233,106 / \$612,652 total funding
 North Dakota \$227,832 / \$417,795 total funding
 Rhode Island \$339,400 + \$46,119 LF / \$724,927 total funding
 South Dakota \$62,892 / \$581,029 total funding
 Vermont \$88,344 + \$46,119 / \$707,481 total funding
 Wyoming \$146,641 / \$328,876 total funding



24

FY2018 State / Local / Total Ombudsman Funding



State	Staffing	State Funding	Total Funding
Alaska	5 FTE	\$497,679	\$731,241
Delaware	5 FTE	\$384,013	\$824,784
D.C.	7 FTE	\$383,252	\$562,602
Idaho	10 FTE	\$312,443	\$652,226
Maine	13.67 FTE	\$756,033	\$1,203,544
Montana	19.72 FTE	\$536,202 + \$212,932 LF	\$1,189,171
New Hampshire	5 FTE	\$233,106	\$612,652
North Dakota	6.50 FTE	\$227,832	\$417,795
Rhode Island	6.15 FTE	\$339,400 + \$46,119 LF	\$724,927
South Dakota	7 FTE	\$62,892	\$581,029
Vermont	6.60 FTE	\$88,344 + \$46,119 LF	\$707,481
Wyoming	5 FTE	\$146,641	\$328,876

3/11/2020

House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

SB2337 SD2 - MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE OFFICE OF THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM.

As a LTCO volunteer I support the above referenced bill

Aloha Chair Buenaventura & Members,

My name is Jim Springer, and a State of Hawaii, Long Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) volunteer here on Oahu. A year and a half ago after an serious illness which was my introduction to aging, as I'm in my 70's; it was a stark eye opener for me to the aging process that we go through and the resources to make it a pleasant journey.

Selfishly, after my recovery, looking for a way to volunteer in the aging area I happened on the State of Hawaii, Long Term Care Ombudsman office that has 2 full time employees and approximately 10 volunteers serving all of the islands 12,500 LTC beds in the State, 9,500 of which are on Oahu.

The LTCO office funding and number of volunteers and staff is woefully inadequate. I don't even remember how I found these 2 souls at the State LTCO office to be able to volunteer. As far as I know, there is nothing of a public nature alerting the public to this amazing wonderful resource for and about kupuna care in LTC facilities. It is federally mandated, and adopted by the State of Hawaii in the 70's. John McDermott, the State LTCO for 20+ years is a tremendous resource to the public and in the field where we volunteers are LTC residents voice with all manner of issues. By enacting SB 2337, the legislature will take a large step forward in providing kupuna in LTC with an advocate for their quality of care and life issues.

In closing, as a volunteer, there is nothing as rewarding and personally satisfying as advocating for a LTC residents quality of care and life issues. We will all be there shortly. The committees passage SB 2337 SD2 will be a feather in your cap.

Mahalo for taking this testimony.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Springer

SB2337 Making Appropriations to the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

March 13, 2020 Room 329 9:00

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Nakamura and committee members

I am a member of the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs, Kokua Council, the Hawaii Alliance of Retired Americans and I volunteer with AARP. I am submitting this testimony as an individual.

I encourage your strong support of SB2337 which would fund six full-time Long-Term Care Ombudsmen (LTCO). This would include two LTCO on Oahu, two on the Big Island, one on Maui and one on Kauai). According to a federal study, states should have one LTCO for every 2000 residents in nursing homes/care homes. Hawaii has nearly 13,000 individuals in such facilities. There is currently one LTCO, one volunteer coordinator and one clerk for the entire state. Logistically, there is no way that that one LTCO can visit these patients, once a year, much less quarterly. Doing the math, he would have to see more than 28 people every day!

Residents of these facilities are usually elderly and frail and, often, have no family or friends to confirm they are getting their needs met. This is the role of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Recent deaths in a Kirkland, WA nursing home emphasize the importance of the Long-Term Care Ombudsmen.

Hawaii has a history of caring for its Kupuna. Please ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are protected.

Barbara J. Service MSW (retired Child Welfare)

Current Senior Advocate, PABEA, Kokua Council, AARP

SB-2337-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 9:13:00 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lynn Niitani	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this measure which will appropriate funds to establish positions and provide support to the long-term care ombudsman program. Long-term care ombudsmen serve residents by advocating for quality care that and make changes to simple but important things like having your room set at a comfortable room temperature to serious issues like receiving appropriate and timely care. The advocacy ombudsmen provide may lead to improved quality of life for vulnerable citizens who are dependent on others for their care.

Having relatives in long-term care facilities on neighbor islands, I know how important it is to have an advocate who is outside of the facility to whom I can turn to for advice and information free from bias and without fear of retaliation. It is comforting to know that someone is visiting my relatives and making sure their concerns are addressed. All of our kupuna deserve access to these services and John McDermott has been doing this alone for too long. It is time to dedicate funding to these much-needed services and ensure this program has the resources it needs. Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit my testimony in support of SB 2337.

SB-2337-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 9:04:30 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Clarence Agena	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I have been a volunteer in the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) for two years, and have been an advocate for residents primarily at Ka Punawai Ola Nursing Facility in Kapolei. I spend over two hours per week helping the residents in the facility. I have also been involved with the Project Dana Caregivers Support Group and the City Elderly Affairs Division RSVP. My past career was with the Hawaii National Guard and State Department of Defense. I am now focused as a volunteer with the LTCOP and being a volunteer mentor, advisor, and counselor to seniors and caregivers. As a 75 year old senior myself, I'm just keeping myself busy helping others. Please support SB2337.

TO : HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS
Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura Chair
Rep. Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair

LATE

FROM: Eldon L. Wegner, Ph.D.
Board Member, Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition

SUBJECT: SB2337 SD 2 Making an Appropriation for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

HEARING: Friday, March 13, 2020, 9:00 am
Conference Room 329, Hawaii State Capitol

POSITION: The Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition **strongly supports** SB 2337 SD2 which appropriates funds for FY 2020-2021 to establish 5 FTE **Ombudsmen specialist positions**

RATIONALE:

The Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition (HFCC) is a coalition of agencies and individuals committed to addressing the needs of family caregivers and improving the ability of family caregivers to provide quality care for their frail and disabled loved ones.

The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman is federally mandated to assure that an acceptable quality of care is available in residential long-term care settings. The State of Hawaii currently has 1696 such facilities which provide care for over 12,000 residents. While most facilities offer good care, the quality of care varies considerable between facilities. The results of inspections as well as complaints filed with the Office indicate that there are many serious shortcomings in care which need addressing.

The residents of these facilities are frail with complex care needs. When available, family members can advocate for their members. However, many residents don't have available family members to watch after their care. The Office exists because these residents deserve protection and decent care, and their families often are anxious that they may not be receiving comfortable and adequate care.

Unfortunately, the office is woefully understaffed and it is impossible to visit all the facilities even once a year. The island geography is also a challenge and adequate oversight can only be offered where there is full-time staff residing in each county. It is impossible for the Ombudman based in Honolulu to monitor and respond to the complaints and needs of residents across all the islands.

I implore you to provide the modest appropriation for this very valuable program.

Thank you
Eldon L. Wegner, Ph.D
Professor Emeritus in Sociology
University of Hawaii at Manoa

Thank you
Eldon L. Wegner, Ph.D.

SB-2337-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2020 8:55:29 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/13/2020 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
jacqueline gardner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

as a 66 year old female i am in support of the long term ombudsman program having paid positions for the outer islands and not having to rely on non existent volunteers to do the job. Our seniors in long term care deserve a dedicated voice of their own