S.B. NO. 2337

JAN 17 2020

A BILL FOR AN ACT

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

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that in the executive 2 office on aging reorganization of June 2015, the long-term care 3 ombudsman program was reduced in staff to only the director, 4 making Hawaii the only state in the country with a long-term 5 care ombudsman program staff of one. In 1995, a time when most 6 residents lived in nursing homes, the Institute of Medicine 7 recommended at a minimum one full-time paid ombudsman for every 8 two thousand long-term care residents. Hawaii has over twelve 9 thousand long-term care residents, most of whom live in the 10 community rather than in nursing homes, which creates greater 11 challenges. Under the 1995 recommendation, Hawaii should have a 12 minimum of six full-time long-term care ombudsmen.

13 The legislature also finds that the long-term care 14 ombudsman program may utilize volunteers. Currently there are 15 nine ombudsman volunteers. Consequently, the volunteer long-16 term care ombudsmen are not reimbursed for 1,248 hours of



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service a year involving extensive travel to visit the long-term
care residents in their districts.

3 The legislature further finds that in addition to visits to 4 long-term care facilities, long-term care ombudsmen respond to a 5 multitude of complaints, engage in investigations, and provide 6 information, assistance, and referrals to long-term residents 7 and their families. As of 2019, there were 1,406 long-term care 8 facilities on Oahu, 36 facilities on Kauai, 72 facilities on 9 Maui, and 182 facilities on Hawaii for a total of 1,696 10 facilities state-wide. The long-term care ombudsman program 11 lacks staff to visit each facility on an annual basis, let alone 12 also facilitate resident and family councils, provide more 13 community education, and work more closely with neighbor island 14 county councils and the area agencies on aging. The long-term 15 care ombudsman program requires resources to ensure that the 16 neighbor islands' kupuna and their families receive the same 17 equal access to the services provided by the long-term care ombudsman program as Oahu has received since 1975. 18

19 The purpose of this Act is to establish and fund six long-20 term care ombudsmen positions, two for the city and county of 21 Oahu, one for the county of Maui, two for the county of Hawaii,



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1 and one for the county of Kauai, within the office of the long-2 term care ombudsman to work under the supervision of the long-3 term care ombudsman in achieving the goals of the program as 4 mandated by the United States Administration on Aging through 5 the Older Americans Act.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general 6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$467,651 or so much 7 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 to 8 establish six full-time equivalent (6.0 FTE) ombudsman 9 specialist positions within the office of the long-term care 10 ombudsman; provided that two positions shall be assigned to each 11 of the counties of Oahu and Hawaii, and one position to each of 12 the counties of Kauai and Maui. 13

14 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the executive15 office on aging for the purposes of this Act.

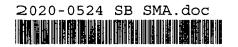
16 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.

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Report Title:

Office of the Long-term Care Ombudsman; Ombudsman Specialist; Kupuna Caucus; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the office of the long-term care ombudsman for six full-time (6.0 FTE) ombudsman specialist positions; two each on Oahu and Hawaii and one each on Kauai and Maui.

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