
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



1 service a year involving extensive travel to visit the long-term
2 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
18 ombudsman program as Oahu has received since 1975.

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.

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

14 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the executive
 15 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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INTRODUCED BY:

John
Chick
Frank
Sam
David
Doug

Gregory
Paul
John
Don



Nadai K. Nelson

Mya. Hill

Ch Todd

Disakitzyan

Lyn DeCote

Vivian E. Loran

~~Al De~~

Ray M. Hill

Angie

Guthrie Thicker

Hakelund

Falsch

Della A. Pletti

Tim Wilby

Anna Ponso

Strakyn Mori

~~John~~

Al De

James C. Hill

Val

DO Hill

Tonny

Baker

Mark Hill

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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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