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# 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, which involves extensive travel to visit the  
2 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 care  
7 residents and their families. As of 2019, there were 1,406  
8 long-term care facilities on Oahu, 36 facilities on Kauai, 72  
9 facilities on Maui, and 182 facilities on Hawaii for a total of  
10 1,696 facilities state-wide.

11 The long-term care ombudsman program lacks staff to visit  
12 each facility on an annual basis, let alone also facilitate  
13 resident and family councils, provide more community education,  
14 and work more closely with neighbor island county councils and  
15 the area agencies on aging. The long-term care ombudsman  
16 program requires resources to ensure that the neighbor islands'  
17 kupuna and their families receive the same equal access to  
18 services that have been provided by the long-term care ombudsman  
19 program on Oahu since 1975.

20 The purpose of this Act is to establish and fund long-term  
21 care ombudsmen specialist positions, including positions for the



1 city and county of Oahu, county of Maui, county of Hawaii, and  
2 county of Kauai, within the office of the long-term care  
3 ombudsman. The long-term care ombudsman specialists will work  
4 under the supervision of the long-term care ombudsman to achieve  
5 the goals of the long-term care ombudsman program, as mandated  
6 by the United States Administration on Aging through the Older  
7 Americans Act.

8 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
10 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 to  
11 establish full-time equivalent ( FTE) ombudsman  
12 specialist positions for the office of the long-term care  
13 ombudsman.

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 December 31,  
17 2059.



**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 an unspecified number of ombudsman specialist positions.  
Appropriates funds. Effective 12/31/2059. (HD1)

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