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 long-term care residents lived in nursing homes, the Institute

7 of Medicine recommended, at a minimum, one full-time paid

8 ombudsman for every two thousand long-term care residents.

9 Hawaii has more than twelve thousand long-term care residents,

10 most of whom live in the community rather than in nursing homes,

11 creating greater challenges for the long-term care ombudsman

12 program. Under the 1995 recommendation, Hawaii should have a

13 minimum of six full-time long-term care ombudsmen.

14   The legislature also finds that the long-term care

15 ombudsman program may utilize volunteers and currently has nine

16 individuals working in this capacity. Consequently, the

1   volunteer long-term care ombudsmen are not reimbursed for 1,248

2   hours of service a year including extensive travel to visit the

3   long-term care residents in their districts.

4   The legislature further finds that, in addition to making

5   visits to long-term care facilities, long-term care ombudsmen

6   respond to a multitude of complaints, engage in investigations,

7   and provide information, assistance, and referrals to long-term

8   residents and their families. As of 2019, there were 1,406

9   long-term care facilities on Oahu, thirty-six facilities on

10   Kauai, seventy-two facilities on Maui, and one hundred eighty-

11   two facilities on Hawaii for a total of 1,696 facilities

12   statewide. The long-term care ombudsman program lacks

13   sufficient staff to visit each facility on a quarterly basis,

14   facilitate resident and family councils, provide community

15   education, and work closely with neighbor island county councils

16   and the area agencies on aging. The long-term care ombudsman

17   program requires additional resources to ensure that kupuna and

18   their families on neighbor islands receive equal access to the

19   services the long-term care ombudsman program provides to those

20   on Oahu.

1   Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish and

2 fund five long-term care ombudsman positions within the office

3 of the long-term care ombudsman as follows:

4   (1) One for the city and county of Honolulu;

5   (2) One for the county of Maui;

6   (3) Two for the county of Hawaii; and

7   (4) One for the county of Kauai.

8   The funded ombudsmen shall work under the supervision of

9 the long-term care ombudsman to achieve the goals of the program

10 as mandated by the United States Administration on Aging through

11 the Older Americans Act.

12   SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general

13 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $ or so much

14 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 to

15 establish five full-time equivalent (5.0 FTE) ombudsman

16 specialist positions within the office of the long-term care

17 ombudsman; provided that two positions shall be assigned to the

18 county of Hawaii and one position to each of the counties of

19 Kauai and Maui and the city and county of Honolulu.

20   The sum appropriated shall be expended by the executive

21 office on aging for the purposes of this Act.

1   SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.

Report Title:

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

Description:

Appropriates funds to establish in the office of the long-term care ombudsman five full-time (5.0 FTE) ombudsman positions. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

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