
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. The long-term care
15 ombudsman program has certified close to one hundred eighty
16 volunteers since the volunteer component began in 2001, using



1 considerable time and resources for recruitment, training, and
2 retention; however, currently there are only six ombudsman
3 volunteers. Consequently a volunteer can never substitute for a
4 full-time paid staff position.

5 The legislature further finds that in addition to visits to
6 long-term care facilities, long-term care ombudsmen respond to a
7 multitude of complaints, engage in investigations, and provide
8 information, assistance, and referrals to long-term residents
9 and their families. As of 2015, there were 1,407 long-term care
10 facilities on Oahu, 36 facilities on Kauai, 67 facilities on
11 Maui, and 182 facilities on Hawaii for a total of 1,692
12 facilities state-wide. The long-term care ombudsman program
13 lacks staff to visit each facility on an annual basis, let alone
14 also facilitate resident and family councils, provide more
15 community education, and work more closely with neighbor island
16 county councils and the area agencies on aging. The long-term
17 care ombudsman program requires resources to ensure that the
18 neighbor islands' kupuna and their families receive the same
19 equal access to the services provided by the long-term care
20 ombudsman program as Oahu has received since 1975.



1 The purpose of this Act is to establish and fund three
 2 additional long-term care ombudsmen positions, one for the
 3 county of Maui, one for the county of Hawaii, and one for the
 4 county of Kauai, within the office of the long-term care
 5 ombudsman to work under the supervision of the long-term care
 6 ombudsman in achieving the goals of the program as mandated by
 7 the United States Administration on Aging through the Older
 8 Americans Act.

9 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
 10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$300,000 or so much
 11 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the
 12 long-term care ombudsman program to establish three full-time
 13 equivalent (3.0 FTE) ombudsman specialist positions in the
 14 office of the long-term care ombudsman; provided that one
 15 position shall be assigned to each of the counties of Kauai,
 16 Maui, and Hawaii.

17 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the executive
 18 office on aging for the purposes of this Act.

19 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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Gustaf H. Hagen
M. M. O. O.

Richard Kingman
J. A. O.

Chas. W. Chy
Lyn DeCoite

G. E.

JAN 22 2016

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W. J. M.

Richard King

Cindy Evans

R. C.

Paul Skye

John M. [Signature]



H.B. NO. 1884

Report Title:

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

Description:

Appropriates \$300,000 to the office of the long-term care ombudsman for three full-time (3.0 FTE) ombudsman specialist positions; one each on Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii.

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