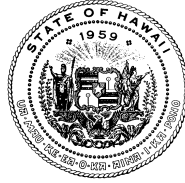


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR

BRUCE ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831
eoa@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB2337
Relating to An Appropriation for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Program**

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
SENATOR RUSSELL E. RUDERMAN, CHAIR
SENATOR KARL RHOADS, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: January 27, 2020
2:45 PM

Room Number: 016

- 1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
- 2 of Health, is providing comments for SB 2337 relating to an appropriation for the Office of the
- 3 Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, a program of the EOA.
- 4 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates \$467,651 for fiscal year 2020-2021 to be
- 5 expended by the Executive Office on Aging to establish six full-time equivalent (6.0 FTE)
- 6 ombudsman positions and operating expenses.
- 7 **Purpose and Justification:** The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is required by federal
- 8 law (Title VII, Chapter 2, Section 711 of the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965, as amended
- 9 by Public Law 89-73) and state law (Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 349-21) to protect the
- 10 human and civil rights of residents in all long-term care settings. The OAA requires the Long-
- 11 Term Care Ombudsman to visit facilities quarterly, respond to complaints, engage in
- 12 investigations, provide information, assistance and referrals to long-term residents and their

1 families, facilitate family councils statewide, provide community education, and administer the
2 program.

3 The LTCOP has 1 Long-Term Care Ombudsman, 1 Volunteer Coordinator, and 1 Oahu
4 Ombudsman position that is established but needs to be filled. EOA has 3 small purchase
5 contracts with the counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui. These contractors are trained
6 Ombudsmen and have assisted to expand quarterly visits; however, they do not replace the
7 unmet needs that would be filled by full-time staff. The Institute on Medicine recommended in
8 1995 at minimum one full-time ombudsman for every two thousand residents. Hawaii has 1,727
9 total facilities with 12,889 residents statewide. Based on these statistics, EOA should have 6 full-
10 time long-term care ombudsmen.

11 Hawaii has the longest life expectancy at 81.3 years of age. The population of the state is 1.4
12 million people with 1 in 4 over 60 years of age. By 2030, the state population will increase to 1.5
13 million with 1 in 3 being over the age of 60. Long-term care residents are the most needy and
14 vulnerable elderly in our community.

15 EOA conducted a comparison of other LTCOP in states of similar size.

- 16 • Maine population of 1.3 million =13 full-time employees
- 17 • West Virginia population of 1.79 million =11 full-time employees
- 18 • New Hampshire population of 1.36 million = 5 full-time employees

19 To meet the goal of quarterly visits and to advocate for the most vulnerable residents in all care
20 settings, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman would need to conduct 28 visits a day statewide.

21 The long-term care ombudsman program requires state support to meet the needs of residents in
22 long-term care settings and to be in compliance with federal and state laws.

1 EOA would like to offer a correction to SB2337. Page 2, line 11 delete the word “annual” and
2 replace with the word “quarterly” to read “lacks staff to visit each facility on a quarterly basis...”
3 We fully support the need to expand staffing and to be in alignment with state and federal laws.
4 We look towards the future as the population continues to increase. EOA through the LTCOP
5 needs to meet its obligation to residents in all care settings.
6 **Recommendation:** The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is not part of the
7 Administration’s budget request. We support funding this program provided that its enactment
8 does not reduce or replace priorities with the Administration’s budget request.
9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair

Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Monday, January 27, 2020
TIME: 2:45PM
PLACE: Conference Room 016
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

*Testimony of John G. McDermott, LSW, ACSW, M.Div.
State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
In **strong support of SB 2337***

Purpose of SB2337: To appropriate 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.

Good afternoon, Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and members of the Committee.

My name is John G. McDermott and I have been the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (SLTCO) since August, 1998.

In 1978 the Older Americans Act (OAA) required all states have an Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. In 1979 HRS 349 was amended to conform with federal law.

The National Institute of Medicine's 1995 report, *"Real People. Real Problems: An Evaluation of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs of the Older Americans Act"* recommended **at a minimum** 1 FTE ombudsman per 2,000 residents.

- Hawaii has 1 FTE ombudsman per 12,889 residents.
- National average is 1 ombudsman to 2,208 beds.

This study was done at a time when most residents were in nursing homes. Today's residents live in many more types of facilities (Adult Residential Care Homes, Assisted Living Fs, CCFFHs) and in Hawaii they are spread over 6 different islands, so the logistics are more complicated than in 1995 and require greater staffing and funding.

The OAA mandates all residents **"have regular and timely access to the LTCOP services."** AOA/Administration on Community Living (ACL) interprets this as "every resident, at a

minimum, should be visited quarterly.” Our 12,889 long-term care residents live in 1,727 facilities. A quarterly visit means I need to visit **28.78 facility visits a day!**

Kauai has 5 NHs w/333 beds, 1 AL w/100 beds, 21 CCFFHs w/48 beds and 6 ARCHs w/26 beds so **33 LTC facilities with 507 beds.**

Maui has 4 NHs w/ 459 beds, 1 AL w/ 144 beds, 59 CCFFHs w/150 beds and 12 ARCHs w/72 beds so **76 LTC facilities with 825 beds.**

Hawaii has 8 NHs w/870 beds, 1 AL w/220 beds, 125 CCFFHs w/339 beds and 42 ARCHs w/190 beds so **176 LTC facilities with 1,619 beds.**

Oahu has 30 NHs w/2,830 beds, 15 ALFs w/2,379 beds, 1,024 CCFFHs w/2,616 beds and 373 ARCHs w/2,113 beds so **1,442 LTC facilities with 9,938 LTC beds.**

Travel to a Neighbor Island includes airfare + car rental + airport parking + per diem. On January 22nd of this year, the average cost would be \$150 + \$60 + \$18 + \$20 = \$248/trip.

Since airlines require passengers arrive one hour before departure – and factoring in the time flying, time picking up the rental car, time driving to the facilities – I have just wasted 2 hours there and two hours back so *only 4 hours left to visit* with the residents.

The time and cost involved clearly demonstrates its much more effective to have “local” ombudsmen who live on the Neighbor Islands, know the people and the community, can be available for evenings or weekend investigations, family councils, senior fairs, recruiting volunteers, working with the local media, County Council and local Area Agencies on Aging.

Neighbor Island residents pay the same federal and state taxes as Oahu, yet they have never had the same “*regular and timely access to services*” provided by the LTCOP. It’s unfair.

One FTE Ombudsman for the entire State doesn’t work. Our young people are moving away. It’s too expensive to live here. Affordable housing is nonexistent. For the kupuna who decide to stay behind, the *extended ohana* are no longer available to help them, support them, protect them. Our ombudsmen help fill in for that loss. Residents know what they tell the ombudsman is confidential and that the ombudsman will visit again on a regular basis so if their situation deteriorates, the ombudsman will be there to advocate on their behalf.

The LTCOP tries to protect our most vulnerable, and often hidden from sight, kupuna. The LTCOP should not be confused with Adult Protective Services or the Department of Health’s Office of Health Care Assurance (the licensing agency). APS only investigates cases of abuse or neglect and they have a screening process to weed out callers. DOH focuses mostly on annual inspections and then they are gone. Yes, they also investigate complaints but only the LTCOP is there to *pro-actively* prevent problems; to work with residents, family and staff to make the facility better; to provide support and protection to the residents, as well as to investigate complaints and address concerns by visiting at least once a quarter.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo for giving me this opportunity to testify.

SB-2337

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 5:40:23 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Deborah Stone-Walls	Testifying for Maui County Office on Aging	Support	No

Comments:

TO : **SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

FROM: Eldon L. Wegner, Ph.D.
Board, Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition

SUBJECT: SB 2237 Making an Appropriation for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

HEARING: Monday, January 27, 2020, 2:45 pm
Conference Room 016, Hawaii State Capitol

POSITION: The Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition **strongly supports** SB 2337 which appropriates \$467,651 for FY 2020-2021 to establish 6 FTE **Ombudsmen specialist positions, 2 positions each for Oahu and Hawaii and 1 position each for Maui and Kauai.**

RATIONALE:

The Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition (HFCC) is a coalition of agencies and individuals committed to addressing the needs of family caregivers and improving the ability of family caregivers to provide quality care for their frail and disabled loved ones.

The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman is a federally office mandated to assure that an acceptable quality of care is available in residential long-term care settings. The State of Hawaii currently has 1696 such facilities which provide care for over 12,000 residents. While most facilities offer good care, the quality of care varies considerable between facilities. The results of inspections as well complaints filed with the Office indicate that there are many shortcomings in care which need addressing.

Unfortunately, the office is woefully understaffed and it is impossible to visit all the facilities even once a year. The island geography is also a challenge and adequate Oversight can only be offered where there is full-time staff residing in each county. It is impossible for the Ombudman based in Honolulu to monitor and respond to the complaints and needs of residents across all the islands.

The residents of these facilities are frail with complex care needs. When available family members can advocate for their members. However, many residents don't have available family members to watch after their care. The Office exists because these residents deserve protection and decent care, and their families often are anxious that they may not be receiving comfortable and adequate care.

I implore you to provide the modest appropriation for this very valuable program.

Thank you
Eldon L. Wegner, Ph.D
Professor Emeritus in Sociology
University of Hawaii at Manoa



HAWAII

AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

OFFICERS	DIRECTORS			MAILING ADDRESS
John Bickel, President	Melodie Aduja	Chuck Huxel	Stephen O'Harrow	P.O. Box 23404
Alan Burdick, Vice President	Juliet Begley	Jan Lubin	Lyn Pyle	Honolulu
Marsha Schweitzer, Treasurer	Ken Farm	Jenny Nomura		Hawai'i 96823
Doug Pyle, Secretary	Stephanie Fitzpatrick	Dave Nagaji		

January 24 , 2020

TO: Chair Ruderman & Members of the Committee on Human Services

RE: SB 2337 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE OFFICE OF THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM.

Support for Hearing on January 27

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in the 1950s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We support SB 2337 as it would fund 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. The number of kupuna needing long term care continues to rise. There are a range of care facilities out there. The Ombudsman positions help to ensure that all facilities provide quality care.





KOKUA COUNCIL TESTIMONY

January 27, 2020 2: 45 pm Room 016

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

DATE: Monday, January 27, 2020

TIME: 2:45PM

PLACE: Conference Room 016

RE: KOKUA COUNCIL SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING BILLS: SB 2336; SB 2339; SB 2335; SB 2337; SB 2342; SB 2102; and SB 2334. We also generally support all efforts to further protect Kupuna.

Specifically, we offer comments on

RE SB 2337 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE OFFICE OF THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM: Kokua Council long been a strong advocate for more funding for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. We urge increases in fund to the minimum amount in this bill, and more if you can find it!

RE SB 2342 RELATING TO THE KUPUNA CAREGIVERS PROGRAM. Kokua Council supports the amendment and funding. However, we strongly encourage the program to also develop criteria to prioritize the circumstances of caregivers to ensure that these limited funds go to those who are most likely to continue in the workforce, and less likely to retire in the immediate future.

RE SB 2339 AND SB 2102 RELATING THE ALZHEIMERS PROGRAMS. Kokua Council supports these efforts and encourages the Department of Health to include Dementia and Early Dementia in their focus on Mental health. We also encourage amending the insurance statues to ensure that early onset dementia is covered by our Prepaid Health Law.

RE SB 2334 RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES AGAINST SENIORS, Kokua Counsel welcomes the added focus and consequences of elder abuse. We suggest adding an appropriation section so that WAM and other committees can ensure that there is adequate funding not only for the increase in elder abuse prosecution resources that may follow from this bill, but also funding for case managers and other agency complementary support services to work with families to avoid situations that may lead to abuse.

Mahalo for your serious consideration of this testimony.



THE SENATE
Committee on Human Services
Monday, January 27, 2020
2:45 pm
Conference Room 016

RE: SB 2337 RELATING TO AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE OFFICE OF LTC OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

To: Senator Russell Ruderman Chair

AARP is a membership organization of people age fifty and over, with nearly 145,000 members in Hawaii. AARP advocates and provides information on issues that matter to our kupuna and their families, including affordable, accessible, quality healthcare, financial resiliency, and livable communities.

SB 2337 appropriates funding to the office of Long Term Care Ombudsman to establish six full time equivalent ombudsman specialists for the counties of Oahu, Hawaii, Kauai and Maui.

AARP **strongly supports** SB 2337. This office is greatly understaffed to respond and investigate complaints and concerns of long term residents who reside in Hawaii's long term care facilities. There is currently one ombudsman and nine ombudsman volunteers responsible to visit residents in Hawaii's 1,696 facilities, which include adult residential care homes, foster care homes, assisted living and nursing homes, caring for over 12,000 residents.

The requested appropriation provides the necessary funding to hire additional ombudsman specialists in each county who can address our vulnerable residents' needs and concerns in the most expedient manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2337.

Keali'i Lopez, State Director
AARP Hawaii

SB-2337

Submitted on: 1/24/2020 6:49:27 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	No

Comments:

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program serves a very important function and in some ways acts in parallel fashion and overlaps with the clients we serve. We have always found them to be very helpful and we know that for a long time they have been in need of additional resources, particularly on the neighbor islands. This issue has been before the legislature for several years and we hope that finally they will receive the appropriations that they need.

SB-2337

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 2:17:58 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ian Ross	Testifying for Alzheimer's Association, Aloha Chapter	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2337

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 2:45:15 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sarah Yuan	Testifying for Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs	Support	Yes

Comments:

The Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs has a statutory obligation to advocate on behalf of the senior citizens of Hawaii. While we advise the Executive Office on Aging, we do not speak on its behalf.

The PABEA strongly supports bill **SB2337** which appropriates appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$467,651 or so much thereof as may be necessary for 2020–2021 to establish six full-time equivalent (6.0 FTE) ombudsman specialist positions within the office of the long-term care ombudsman at the Executive Office on Aging. Two of these positions shall be assigned to each of the counties of Oahu and Hawaii, and one position to each of the counties of Kauai and Maui.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Clarence Agena

Support for SB 2337

SB-2337

Submitted on: 1/24/2020 9:23:45 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lynn Niitani	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To: Committee on Human Services Chair Russell E. Ruderman and Vice Chair Karl Rhoads

RE: Senate Bill 2337 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE OFFICE OF THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

I strongly support this measure to appropriate \$467,651 to establish positions and provide support to the long-term care ombudsman program. Long-term care ombudsmen serve residents by advocating for quality care that can affect changes to simple but important things like the right to nutritious food or a comfortable room temperature to serious issues like receiving appropriate and timely care. The advocacy ombudsmen provide may lead to improved quality of life for vulnerable citizens who are dependent on others for their care.

Having visited relatives in long-term care facilities, I know how important it is to have an advocate who is outside of the facility to whom I can turn to for advice and information free from bias and without fear of retaliation. All of our kupuna deserve access to these services and John McDermott has been doing this alone for too long. It is time to dedicate funding to these much-needed services and ensure that this program has the resources it needs.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit my testimony in support of SB 2337.

Lynn Niitani

Aina Haina

SB-2337

Submitted on: 1/25/2020 5:26:27 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susie Chun Oakland	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2337 to fund 6 full-time specialist positions for the Volunteer Ombudsman's Office to service Hawaii, Kauai, Maui and Oahu. This is a very important measure to protect and support our kupuna. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Susie Chun Oakland

SB-2337

Submitted on: 1/25/2020 6:49:01 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marilyn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair

Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Monday, January 27, 2020

TIME: 2:45PM

Conference Room 016

PLACE: State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Testimony of Marilyn R Seely

In strong support of SB 2337

Purpose of SB2337: To appropriate 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.

Good afternoon, Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and members of the Committee.

My name is Marilyn Seely and I have long been associated the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (SLTCO) here in Hawaii and on the mainland. I have seen its value first hand over and over. In some cases it is the only watchdog for very vulnerable folks in residential care.

Hawaii has a particular problem because of the extremely limited resources available to

do an adequate job of oversight of residents, quality care training with staff and assistance

with policy issues for management all critical parts of an ombudsman program

In 1978 the Older Americans Act (OAA) required all states have an Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. In 1979 HRS 349 was amended to conform with federal law.

The National Institute of Medicine's 1995 report, *"Real People, Real Problems: An Evaluation of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs of the Older Americans Act"* recommended **at a minimum** 1 FTE ombudsman per 2,000 residents.

- Hawaii has 1 FTE ombudsman per 12,889 residents.
 - National average is 1 ombudsman to 2,208 beds.

Originally ombudsmen only worked with nursing homes. Today residential care is broad based and far reaching and the extension of the responsibilities of the ombudsmen has greatly

increased, yet resources have not.

The OAA mandates all residents ***“have regular and timely access to the LTCOP services.”*** AOA/Administration on Community Living (ACL) interprets this as “every resident, at a minimum, should be visited quarterly.” Our 12,889 long-term care residents live in 1,727 facilities. A quarterly visit means the current ombudsman needs to visit **28.78 facility visits a day.**

Kauai has 5 NHs w/333 beds, 1 AL w/100 beds, 21 CCFFHs w/48 beds and 6 ARCHs w/26 beds so **33 LTC facilities with 507 beds.**

Maui has 4 NHs w/ 459 beds, 1 AL w/ 144 beds, 59 CCFFHs w/150 beds and 12 ARCHs w/72 beds so **76 LTC facilities with 825 beds.**

Hawaii has 8 NHs w/870 beds, 1 AL w/220 beds, 125 CCFFHs w/339 beds and 42 ARCHs w/190 beds so **176 LTC facilities with 1,619 beds.**

Oahu has 30 NHs w/2,830 beds, 15 ALFs w/2,379 beds, 1,024 CCFFHs w/2,616 beds and 373 ARCHs w/2,113 beds so **1,442 LTC facilities with 9,938 LTC beds.**

The additional staff provided in this measure will have long lasting protection that is measurable

and significant. I urge you to consider this increase and be a part of advocacy for the most vulnerable among us...those that need it most.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo for giving me this opportunity to testify.

SB-2337

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 5:12:17 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2020 2:45:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dale	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha: I am a 71 years old retired male, former federal employee. At my age, of course, know several people older than myself. Some are in 'Care Home' where they need access to a state Ombudsman, which is their right. Please pass this necessary SB 2337.

The Thirtieth Legislature
Regular Session of 2020

THE SENATE
Committee on Human Services
State Capitol
Conference Room 016
Monday, January 27, 2020; 2:45 p.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE LWU LOCAL 142 ON S.B. 2337
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE OFFICE OF THE
LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM**

The ILWU Local 142 supports S.B. 2337, which appropriates funds to the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman for six full-time equivalent positions, two each on Oahu and Hawaii and one each on Kauai and Maui.

Although nationally recognized standards recommend a minimum of one full-time paid ombudsman for every 2,000 long-term care patients, Hawaii's ombudsman program has had only a staff of one since the Executive Office on Aging's reorganization in 2015—this despite the fact that Hawaii's long-term care population has steadily increased during those years. When staffing had been severely cut, volunteers were recruited, but these volunteers cannot compensate for lack of full-time staff.

Long-term care ombudsmen are vital to ensuring that elderly and disabled individuals who are forced to live in long-term care facilities are properly cared for, receive compassionate and appropriate care, and receive the services they need.

With the likelihood of long-term care facilities increasing as Hawaii's aged population continues to grow and long-term care needs escalate, Hawaii must provide for ombudsmen who can help to ensure the quality of facilities and staffing that serve this particularly vulnerable population.

The ILWU urges passage of S.B. 2337. Thank you for considering our testimony.

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair

Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Monday, January 27, 2020

TIME: 2:45PM

PLACE: Conference Room 016

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Written testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2337

Good afternoon members of the Committee,

My name is Justin Mortensen and I am an undergraduate public health student at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I have recently joined the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program as a volunteer representative.

Hawai'i historically has always been on the forefront on change to ensure our Kupuna are taken care of. A year after the passage of the Older Americans Act (OAA) which required states to have the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP, the state passed HRS 349 to conform to federal law. Our Kupuna is our most vulnerable population and the LTCOP plays a valuable role ensuring advocating and providing support for them. The role of the LTCOP allows us to build rapport with staff of a long-term care facility and the residents, which gives us a better proactive role in recognizing abuse or neglect.

Currently, our state only has one long-term care ombudsman for 1,727 facilities statewide. With one Ombudsman there would need to be roughly 28 visits a day. That is not sufficient time to be able to speak with residents, staff, and when warranted conduct investigations. That does not even include travel time and expense to other islands. Compared to most states that are close in our population size, we spend the least money and have the least staff. By not funding a program that is vital to protecting our Kupuna, we are not doing the best we can for them.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo

Harry Kim
Mayor



William H. Farr
Acting Executive on Aging

LATE

County of Hawai'i

OFFICE OF AGING

Aging and Disability Resource Center, 1055 Kino'ole Street, Suite 101, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-3872
Phone (808) 961-8600 ♦ Fax (808) 961-8603 ♦ Email: hcoa@hawaiiintel.net
West Hawai'i Civic Center, 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Highway, Kailua-Kona 96740
Phone (808) 323-4390 ♦ Fax (808) 323-4398

January 27, 2020

The Honorable Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice-Chair
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Re: Support of SB2337, relating to MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE
OFFICE OF THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUSMAN PROGRAM
2:45 P.M., January 27, 2020, Conference Room 016**

Dear Senator Ruderman and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

I am writing this letter in support of the Kupuna Caucus initiative to appropriate 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.

Although, Hawaii's LTCOP staffing has remained the same since 1978, current demographics of Hawaii's older individuals has continued to increase. While in previous years, when most residents were living in nursing homes, the current population has shifted where many more are now living out in the community. To visit all of these residents, on six different islands creates a logistical challenge under current staffing levels.

As a federally-mandated program, our LTCOP continues to remain at the bottom of the list in terms of staffing and funding across the country. The proposed appropriation will only meet staffing standards set in 1995, and does not take into account federally mandated changes in the Older American Act title VII requirements.

In supporting this appropriation, we will continue show our support for some of the most vulnerable residents in our State.

Thank you,

William "Horace" Farr
Acting Executive on Aging
Hawaii County Office of Aging



An Area Agency on Aging

Hawai'i County is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

LATE

Valerie Muroki

Support for SB 2337

I am a long-term care ombudsman volunteer in the County of Maui. Maui County has 450 skilled nurses for 144 assisted living beds and 150 beds in community care foster family homes. I love the work but we only visit 5 facilities. We are supposed to go to the facilities once a quarter as per law, but we go to the facility once a week because they need us there. We can't cover everything. We really need more people to help the elderly. There was an elderly individual that almost went homeless, but they are working on it through our visits. The money provided in this bill is needed.

Thank you.