

## General Assembly

Raised Bill No. 804

January Session, 2019

LCO No. 3668



Referred to Committee on AGING

Introduced by: (AGE)

## AN ACT REQUIRING THE STATE OMBUDSMAN TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS CONCERNING RECIPIENTS OF HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. Section 17a-405 of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- 3 (a) As used in this chapter:
- 4 (1) "State agency" means the Department of Rehabilitation Services.
- 5 (2) "Office" or "Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman" means
- 6 the organizational unit which is headed by the State Long-Term Care
- 7 Ombudsman established in this section.
- 8 (3) "State Ombudsman" means the individual who heads the office
- 9 established in this section.
- 10 (4) "Assistant State Ombudsman" means the person appointed by
- 11 the State Ombudsman to assist the State Ombudsman in carrying out

LCO No. 3668 **1** of 16

- 12 the duties of the State Ombudsman pursuant to section 17a-408, as
- 13 <u>amended by this act.</u>
- [(4)] (5) "Program" means the long-term care ombudsman program
- 15 established in this section.
- [(5)] (6) "Representative of the office" includes the Assistant State
- 17 Ombudsman, a regional ombudsman, a residents' advocate or an
- 18 employee of the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman who is
- 19 individually designated by the State Ombudsman.
- 20 (7) "Recipient" means an individual receiving home and
- 21 <u>community-based services who is sixty years of age or older.</u>
- 22 [(6)] (8) "Resident" means an individual who resides in a long-term
- 23 care facility.
- [(7)] (9) "Long-term care facility" means any skilled nursing facility,
- as defined in Section 1819(a) of the Social Security Act, (42 USC 1395i-
- 26 3(a)) any nursing facility, as defined in Section 1919(a) of the Social
- 27 Security Act, (42 USC 1396r(a)) a board and care facility as defined in
- 28 Section 102(19) of the federal Older Americans Act, (42 USC 3002(19))
- 29 and for purposes of ombudsman program coverage, an institution
- regulated by the state pursuant to Section 1616(e) of the Social Security
- 31 Act, (42 USC 1382e(e)) and any other adult care home similar to a
- 32 facility or nursing facility or board and care home.
- [(8)] (10) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Rehabilitation
- 34 Services.
- 35 [(9)] (11) "Applicant" means an individual who has applied for
- admission to a long-term care facility or for home and community-
- 37 based services.
- 38 (12) "Home and community-based services" means long-term care
- 39 provided in a home or community setting, or both, to a recipient.
- 40 [(10)] (13) "Resident representative" means (A) an individual chosen

LCO No. 3668 2 of 16

by the resident or recipient to act on behalf of the resident or recipient in order to support the resident or recipient in decision making, accessing medical, social or other personal information of the resident or recipient, managing financial matters, or receiving notifications; (B) a person authorized by state or federal law to act on behalf of the resident or recipient in order to support the resident or recipient in decision making, accessing medical, social or other personal information of the resident or recipient, managing financial matters, or receiving notifications; (C) a legal representative, as used in Section 712 of the Older Americans Act; or (D) the court-appointed guardian or conservator of a resident or recipient.

- (b) There is established an independent Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman within the Department of Rehabilitation Services. The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services shall appoint a State Ombudsman who shall be selected from among individuals with expertise and experience in the fields of long-term care and advocacy to head the office and the State Ombudsman shall appoint an Assistant State Ombudsman and regional ombudsmen. In the event the State Ombudsman or a regional ombudsman is unable to fulfill the duties of the office, the commissioner shall appoint an acting State Ombudsman. [and the State Ombudsman shall appoint] In the event the Assistant State Ombudsman or a regional ombudsman is unable to fulfill the duties of the office, the State Ombudsman shall appoint an acting Assistant State Ombudsman or an acting regional ombudsman.
- (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, on and after July 1, 1990, the positions of State Ombudsman and regional ombudsmen shall be classified service positions. The State Ombudsman and regional ombudsmen holding said positions on said date shall continue to serve in their positions as if selected through classified service procedures. As vacancies occur in such positions thereafter, such vacancies shall be filled in accordance with classified service procedures.
  - (d) The activities of the State Ombudsman or representatives of the

LCO No. 3668 3 of 16

- office do not constitute lobbying under 45 CFR Part 93.
- Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 17a-406 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July* 1, 2019):
- 78 Residents' advocates shall be appointed by the State 79 Ombudsman, in consultation with the regional ombudsmen, for each 80 region in sufficient number to serve the long-term care facilities and 81 recipients of home and community-based services within such region. 82 Such residents' advocates shall, if possible, be residents of the region in 83 which they will serve, and shall have demonstrated an interest in the 84 care of individuals who reside in long-term care facilities or who are 85 recipients of home and community-based services. Residents' 86 advocates shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed 87 for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, 88 within available appropriations.
- Sec. 3. Section 17a-407 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):

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- No person may perform any functions as a residents' advocate until the person has successfully completed a course of training required by the State Ombudsman. Any residents' advocate who fails to complete such a course within a reasonable time after appointment may be removed by the State Ombudsman or the regional ombudsman for the region in which such residents' advocate serves. The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services, after consultation with the State Ombudsman, shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to carry out the provisions of this section. Such regulations shall include, but <u>need</u> not be limited to, the course of training required by this section.
- Sec. 4. Section 17a-408 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- 104 (a) The State Ombudsman shall establish and operate ombudsman

LCO No. 3668 **4** of 16

- (b) The State Ombudsman shall serve on a full-time basis, and shall, to the extent permissible under federal law and within available appropriations, personally or through representatives of the office:
- 111 (1) Identify, investigate and resolve complaints that:

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- (A) Are made by, or on behalf of, residents <u>and recipients</u> or, as to complaints involving the application for <u>(i)</u> admission to a long-term care facility, <u>or (ii)</u> home and community-based services by or on behalf of applicants; and
- 116 (B) Relate to action, inaction or decisions that may adversely affect 117 the health, safety, welfare or rights of the residents <u>and recipients</u>, 118 including the welfare and rights of the residents <u>and recipients</u> with 119 respect to the appointment and activities of guardians and 120 representative payees, of (i) providers or representatives of providers 121 of long-term care services, <u>including home and community-based</u> 122 <u>services</u>, (ii) public agencies, or (iii) health and social service agencies;
  - (2) Provide services to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of the residents <u>and recipients</u>;
- (3) Inform the residents <u>and recipients</u> about means of obtaining services provided by providers or agencies described in subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of this subsection or services described in subdivision (2) of this subsection;
  - (4) Ensure that the residents, recipients and [, as to issues involving applications for admission to long-term care facilities,] applicants have regular and timely access to the services provided through the office and that the residents, recipients, applicants and other complainants receive timely responses from representatives of the office to complaints;

LCO No. 3668 5 of 16

- 135 (5) Represent the interests of the residents, recipients and [of] applicants in relation to issues concerning applications to long-term 136 137 care facilities, or for home and community-based services before governmental agencies and seek administrative, legal and other 138 139 remedies to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of the 140 residents, recipients and applicants;
- 141 administrative technical (6) Provide and assistance to 142 representatives of the office and training in areas including, but not 143 limited to, Alzheimer's disease and dementia symptoms and care;
  - (7) (A) Analyze, comment on and monitor the development and implementation of federal, state and local laws, regulations, and other governmental policies and actions that pertain to the health, safety, welfare and rights of the residents and recipients with respect to the adequacy of long-term care facilities and home and community-based services in this state and to the rights of applicants in relation to applications to long-term care facilities and for home and communitybased services;
    - (B) Recommend any changes in such laws, regulations, policies and actions as the office determines to be appropriate; and
- 154 (C) Facilitate public comment on such laws, regulations, policies 155 and actions;
- 156 (8) Advocate for:

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- (A) Any changes in federal, state and local laws, regulations and other governmental policies and actions that pertain to the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents and recipients with respect to the adequacy of long-term care facilities and home and communitybased services in this state and to the health, safety, welfare and rights of applicants [which] that the State Ombudsman determines to be appropriate;
  - (B) Appropriate action by groups or agencies with jurisdictional

LCO No. 3668 **6** of 16

- 165 authority to deal with problems affecting individual residents and 166 recipients and the general resident population and applicants in 167 relation to issues concerning applications to long-term care facilities and for home and community-based services; and 168
- 169 (C) The enactment of legislative recommendations by the General 170 Assembly and of regulatory recommendations by commissioners of 171 Connecticut state agencies;
- 172 (9) (A) Provide for training representatives of the office;
- 173 (B) Promote the development of citizen organizations to participate 174 in the program; and
- 175 (C) Provide technical support for the development of resident and 176 family councils to protect the well-being and rights of residents;
- 177 (10) Coordinate ombudsman services with the protection and 178 advocacy systems for individuals with developmental disabilities and 179 mental illnesses established under (A) Part A of the [Development] 180 Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (42 USC 181 6001, et seq.), and (B) The Protection and Advocacy for Mentally III 182 Individuals Act of 1986 (42 USC 10801 et seq.);
- 183 (11) Coordinate, to the greatest extent possible, ombudsman services 184 with legal assistance provided under Section 306(a)(2)(C) of the federal 185 Older Americans Act of 1965, (42 USC 3026(a)(2)(C)) as amended from 186 time to time, through the adoption of memoranda of understanding 187 and other means;
- 188 (12) Create, and periodically update as needed, a training manual 189 for nursing home facilities identified in section 19a-522c that provides 190 guidance on structuring and implementing the training required by said section:

192 (13) Develop policies and procedures regarding the communication 193 and documentation of informed consent in the case of resident or 194 <u>recipient</u> complaints, including, but not limited to, the use of auxiliary

LCO No. 3668 **7** of 16

- aids and services or the use of a resident representative; and
- 196 (14) Carry out such other activities and duties as may be required under federal law.
- Sec. 5. Section 17a-409 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- 200 The State Ombudsman is authorized to investigate and make 201 reports and recommendations concerning any act or the failure to act 202 by any agency, official or public employee, with respect to their 203 responsibilities and duties in connection with long-term care facilities 204 or home and community-based services, except the courts and their 205 personnel, legislative bodies and their personnel and the chief 206 executive of the state and the chief executive's personal staff and all 207 elected officials.
- Sec. 6. Section 17a-410 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- The regional ombudsmen shall, in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and within available appropriations:
- 213 (1) Provide services to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents and recipients;
- (2) Ensure that residents <u>and recipients</u> in service areas have regular timely access to representatives of the office and timely responses to complaints and requests for assistance;
- 218 (3) Identify, investigate and resolve complaints made by or on 219 behalf of residents <u>and recipients</u> that relate to action, inaction or 220 decisions that may adversely affect [the] <u>their</u> health, safety, welfare or 221 rights [of the residents] or by, or on behalf of, applicants in relation to 222 issues concerning applications <u>for admission</u> to long-term care 223 facilities <u>or for home and community-based services</u>;

LCO No. 3668 **8** of 16

- (4) Represent the interests of residents, recipients and applicants, in relation to their applications [to long-term care facilities] for admission to long-term care facilities or for home and community-based services, before government agencies and seek administrative, legal and other remedies to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of the residents, recipients and applicants;
- (5) (A) Review and, if necessary, comment on any existing and proposed laws, regulations and other government policies and actions that pertain to the rights and well-being of residents, recipients and applicants in relation to their applications, [to long-term care facilities,] and (B) facilitate the ability of the public to comment on the laws, regulations, policies and actions;
- 236 (6) Support the development of resident and family councils; and
- (7) Carry out other activities that the State Ombudsman determinesto be appropriate.
- Sec. 7. Section 17a-411 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- 241 (a) Residents' advocates, under supervision of the regional 242 ombudsmen, shall assist the regional ombudsmen in the performance 243 of all duties and responsibilities of the regional ombudsmen as 244 described in section 17a-410, as amended by this act.
- 245 (b) All long-term care facilities shall post or cause to be posted in a 246 conspicuous place therein a list of the names of the appropriate 247 residents' advocates and the names, addresses, and telephone numbers 248 of the appropriate <u>regional</u> ombudsmen.
- (c) All providers of home and community-based services shall
   provide their clients with a list of residents' advocates and the names,
   addresses and telephone numbers of the appropriate regional
   ombudsmen.
- [(c)] (d) The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services shall have

LCO No. 3668 9 of 16

- 254 authority to seek funding for the purposes contained in this section
- 255 from public and private sources, including, but not limited to, any
- 256 federal or state funded programs.
- 257 Sec. 8. Section 17a-414 of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 258 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- 259 (a) The state agency shall, within available appropriations, ensure 260 that:
- 261 (1) Adequate legal counsel is available and is able, without conflict
- 262 of interest, to: (A) Provide advice and consultation needed to protect
- 263 the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents, recipients and
- 264 applicants in relation to their applications; [to long-term care facilities;]
- 265 and (B) assist the State Ombudsman and representatives of the office in
- 266 the performance of the official duties of the State Ombudsman and
- 267 representatives of the office; and
- 268 (2) Administrative, legal and other appropriate remedies are
- 269 pursued on behalf of residents, recipients and applicants in relation to
- 270 their applications. [to long-term care facilities.]
- 271 (b) The Assistant State Ombudsman, regional ombudsmen and
- 272 residents' advocates shall be considered state employees under section
- 273 4-141 for the purposes of any civil action for damages on account of
- 274 any act or omission that is not wanton, wilful or malicious and that is
- 275 within the scope of employment or duties under sections 17a-405 to
- 276 17a-417, inclusive, <u>as amended by this act</u>, 19a-531 and 19a-532.
- 277 Sec. 9. Section 17a-415 of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 278 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- 279 (a) The State Ombudsman, Assistant State Ombudsman, regional
- 280 ombudsmen and representatives of the office shall have:
- 281 (1) Access to long-term care facilities and residents;
- 282 (2) Appropriate access to review the medical and social records of a

LCO No. 3668 **10** of 16

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- 293 (3) Access to the administrative records, policies and documents, to 294 which the residents have, or the general public has access, of long-term 295 care facilities; and
  - (4) Access to and, on request, copies of all licensing and certification records maintained by the state with respect to long-term care facilities and providers of home and community-based services.
  - person or entity who wilfully interferes with (b) representatives of the office in the performance of the official duties of the representatives of the office, or any long-term care facility, home and community-based service provider or other entity which retaliates or exacts reprisals with respect to any resident, recipient, employee or other person for filing a complaint with, providing information to, or otherwise cooperating with any representative of the office, or longterm care facility which refuses to permit the State Ombudsman, [or] Assistant State Ombudsman, any regional ombudsman or any residents' or recipients' advocate entry into such facility or refuses to cooperate with the State Ombudsman, or any regional ombudsman or any residents' or recipients' advocate in the carrying out of [their] his or her mandated duties and responsibilities enumerated under sections 17a-405 to 17a-417, inclusive, as amended by this act, 19a-531 and 19a-532 or refuses to permit [residents] any resident or recipient or staff to communicate freely with the State Ombudsman, [or] Assistant State Ombudsman, any regional ombudsman or any residents' or

LCO No. 3668 11 of 16

- 318 (c) In carrying out the duties enumerated in sections 17a-405 to 17a-319 417, inclusive, as amended by this act, 19a-531 and 19a-532, the State 320 Ombudsman, the Assistant State Ombudsman, the regional 321 ombudsmen and the residents' or recipients' advocates shall have 322 access to all relevant public records, except that records which are 323 confidential to a resident or recipient shall only be divulged with the 324 written consent of the resident or recipient.
- (d) In the performance of the duties and responsibilities enumerated under sections 17a-405 to 17a-417, inclusive, <u>as amended by this act,</u> 19a-531 and 19a-532, the State Ombudsman, <u>the Assistant State</u> Ombudsman, the regional ombudsmen and the residents' <u>or recipients'</u> advocates may utilize any other state department, agency or commission, or any other public or private agencies, groups or individuals who are appropriate and who may be available.
- Sec. 10. Section 17a-417 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services shall require the State Ombudsman to, within available appropriations:
- 336 (1) Prepare an annual report:
- (A) Describing the activities carried out by the office in the year for which the report is prepared;
- 339 (B) Containing and analyzing the data collected under section 17a-340 418, as amended by this act;
- 341 (C) Evaluating the problems experienced by and the complaints 342 made by or on behalf of residents <u>and recipients</u>;
- 343 (D) Containing recommendations for (i) improving the quality of 344 the care and life of the residents <u>and recipients</u>, and (ii) protecting the

LCO No. 3668 12 of 16

- 345 health, safety, welfare and rights of the residents and recipients;
- 346 (E) (i) Analyzing the success of the program including success in 347 providing services to residents [of long-term care facilities] <u>and</u> 348 <u>recipients</u>; and (ii) identifying barriers that prevent the optimal 349 operation of the program; and
- 350 (F) Providing policy, regulatory and legislative recommendations to 351 solve identified problems, to resolve the complaints, to improve the 352 quality of the care and life of residents <u>and recipients</u>, to protect [the] 353 <u>their</u> health, safety, welfare and rights [of residents] and to remove the 354 barriers that prevent the optimal operation of the program.

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- (2) Analyze, comment on and monitor the development and implementation of federal, state and local laws, regulations and other government policies and actions that pertain to long-term care facilities and home and community-based services, and to the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents and recipients in the state, and recommend any changes in such laws, regulations and policies as the office determines to be appropriate.
- (3) (A) Provide such information as the office determines to be necessary to public and private agencies, legislators and other persons, regarding (i) the problems and concerns of [older individuals residing in long-term care facilities] residents and recipients; and (ii) recommendations related to the problems and concerns; and (B) make available to the public and submit to the federal assistant secretary for aging, the Governor, the General Assembly, the Department of Public Health and other appropriate governmental entities, each report prepared under subdivision (1) of this section.
- Sec. 11. Section 17a-418 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- The state agency shall establish a state-wide uniform system to: (1)
  Collect and analyze data relating to complaints and conditions in longterm care facilities and, [to residents] within available appropriations,

LCO No. 3668 13 of 16

- 376 complaints relating to services provided to residents and recipients for
- 377 the purpose of identifying and resolving significant problems; and (2)
- submit the data, on a regular basis to: (A) The Department of Public
- 379 Health; (B) other state and federal entities that the State Ombudsman
- determines to be appropriate; and (C) the National Ombudsman
- 381 Resource Center, established in Section 202(a)(21) of the federal Older
- 382 Americans Act of 1965, as amended from time to time.
- Sec. 12. Section 17a-419 of the general statutes is repealed and the
- following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- 385 The state agency shall:
- 386 (1) Provide that the files and records maintained by the program
- may be disclosed only at the discretion of the State Ombudsman or the
- 388 person designated by the ombudsman to disclose the files and records;
- 389 and
- 390 (2) Prohibit the disclosure of the identity of any complainant, [or]
- 391 resident or recipient with respect to whom the office maintains such
- 392 files or records unless (A) the complainant, [or] resident or recipient, or
- the legal representative of the complainant, [or] resident or recipient,
- 394 consents to the disclosure and the consent is given in writing; (B) (i) the
- complainant, [or] resident or recipient gives consent orally; and (ii) the
- 396 consent is documented contemporaneously in a writing made by a
- 397 representative of the office in accordance with such requirements as
- 398 the state agency shall establish; or (iii) the disclosure is required by
- 399 court order.
- Sec. 13. Section 17a-420 of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 401 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2019*):
- In planning and operating the program, the state agency, in
- 403 consultation with the State Ombudsman, shall consider the views of
- area agencies on aging, long-term care facility residents, recipients and
- 405 providers of long-term care, including home and community-based
- 406 services.

LCO No. 3668 14 of 16

Sec. 14. Subdivision (3) of section 17a-421 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July* 1, 2019):

(3) Ensure that the State Ombudsman: (A) Does not have a direct involvement in the licensing or certification of a long-term care facility or of a provider of a long-term care service, including a home and community-based service; (B) does not have an ownership or investment interest, represented by equity, debt or other financial relationship, in a long-term care facility or a long-term care service, including a home and community-based service; (C) is not employed by, or participating in the management of, a long-term care facility or a home and community-based service and has not been employed by or participated in such management in the twelve months prior to being State Ombudsman; and (D) does not receive, or have the right to receive, directly or indirectly, remuneration, in cash or in kind, under a compensation arrangement with an owner or operator of a long-term care facility or a home and community-based service; and

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following		
sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2019	17a-405
Sec. 2	July 1, 2019	17a-406(a)
Sec. 3	July 1, 2019	17a-407
Sec. 4	July 1, 2019	17a-408
Sec. 5	July 1, 2019	17a-409
Sec. 6	July 1, 2019	17a-410
Sec. 7	July 1, 2019	17a-411
Sec. 8	July 1, 2019	17a-414
Sec. 9	July 1, 2019	17a-415
Sec. 10	July 1, 2019	17a-417
Sec. 11	July 1, 2019	17a-418
Sec. 12	July 1, 2019	17a-419
Sec. 13	July 1, 2019	17a-420
Sec. 14	July 1, 2019	17a-421(3)

LCO No. 3668 **15** of 16

## Statement of Purpose:

To expand the investigatory oversight of the State Ombudsman to include home and community-based services.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

LCO No. 3668 **16** of 16