



1107 9th Street, Suite 625 • Sacramento, CA 95814 • (916) 498-9608 • mail@consumercal.org

March 21, 2017

The Honorable Ash Kalra
Chair, Assembly Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care
State Capitol, Room 2191
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 550 (Reyes) – State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program: funding – Support
Assembly Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care - April 4, 2017

Dear Assemblymember Kalra:

The Consumer Federation of California (CFC) writes in support of AB 550, authored by Assemblymember Reyes, which revises the California Department of Aging Funding Formula¹ for the 35 local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs -- from the 1989 allocation of \$35,000 local program base to \$100,000 local program base.

The state and federally mandated purpose of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is to ensure the highest possible quality of life and care for residents of long-term care facilities. Through a combination of paid staff and well-trained certified volunteers, the Ombudsman organizations provide regular, unannounced in-person visits, resident advocacy; they identify and resolve complaints, in addition to ensuring that facilities are free from health and safety issues. They serve as eyes, ears and advocates for residents, particularly the 60 percent of residents without family members visiting to observe care and report problems.

Having well trained certified volunteer Ombudsmen in California's long-term care facilities is the single most cost effective opportunity to prevent complaints of neglect and abuse from occurring. An adequately funded ombudsman program is a vital part of the long-term care safety net. When ombudsman programs are able to fulfill their state and federal service mandates, not only do care facility residents benefit from a higher quality of life and care, but the state is also able to reduce costs for new complaints that would otherwise be referred directly to the licensing agencies.

This increase to the program base allows for the minimal level of supervisory staff needed to recruit, support and retain ombudsman volunteers who in turn protect and improve the lives of California residents in long-term care facilities.

We respectfully urge your support of AB 550. If you or your staff has any questions, please contact Aaron Lewis, CFC Legislative Advocate, at (916) 498-9616.

Sincerely,

Richard Holober
Executive Director

cc: Members, Assembly Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care
Assemblymember Reyes

¹ Welfare & Institutions Code Section 9719.5.