

2026 -- H 7059

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LC003479

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

JOINT RESOLUTION

**MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$100,000 TO THE RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF
HEALTHY AGING FOR THE ALLIANCE FOR BETTER LONG-TERM CARE
OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM**

Introduced By: Representatives Slater, and Diaz

Date Introduced: January 09, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

1 WHEREAS, The federal Older Americans Act (OAA) requires every state to have an
2 Ombudsman Program that addresses complaints, protects resident rights and advocates for
3 improvements in the long-term care system, and in 1995, Rhode Island passed a law to establish
4 the state long-term care ombudsman program; and

5 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman operates as
6 an independent body whose purpose is to assist elders and individuals with disabilities receiving
7 long-term care services; and

8 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman is
9 administered by the RI Office of Healthy Aging through a contract with the Alliance for Better
10 Long-Term Care using a combination of federal and state funds; and

11 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman advocates on
12 behalf of residents of the State's 76 licensed nursing facilities with 8,405 beds, 65 assisted living
13 residences with 5,209 units, and residents of the Bristol Veterans' Home and the Eleanor Slater
14 Hospital; and

15 WHEREAS, Many residents of these facilities have chronic conditions, need assistance
16 with daily living tasks, and may feel isolated and often face unmet needs; and

17 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's
18 responsibilities include identifying, investigating and resolving through mediation, negotiation,
19 and administrative action, complaints filed by residents or individuals acting on their behalf, as

1 well as representing resident interests before government agencies, reviewing and commenting as
2 appropriate on laws, regulations and policies relating to the rights and well-being of residents of
3 facilities, and providing information to residents and the public; and

4 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Department of Health surveys have found an increase in
5 serious deficiencies in nursing facility care over the last several years, and assisted living
6 residents have higher care needs than in the past; and

7 WHEREAS, There has been a significant increase in the workload of the RI Office of the
8 Long-Term Care Ombudsman with the number of complaints received more than tripling going
9 from 597 in 2023, to 1,787 to date in 2025, with 30 percent of the 2025 complaints relating to
10 abuse, gross neglect and exploitation and 22 percent relating to care issues; and

11 WHEREAS, Combined federal and state funding to operate the RI Office of the Long-
12 Term Care Ombudsman has not increased to reflect inflation or the increased workload leaving
13 vulnerable long-term care residents at risk for poorer quality of care or infringement of their
14 rights; now, therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That there is hereby appropriated, out of money in the treasury not
16 otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year 2026-2027, the sum of one hundred thousand dollars
17 (\$100,000) to the Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging for the Alliance for Better Long-Term
18 Care Ombudsman Program; and the state controller is hereby authorized and directed to draw
19 their orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of said sum, or so much thereof as may be
20 from time to time required, upon receipt of properly authenticated vouchers.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

J O I N T R E S O L U T I O N

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$100,000 TO THE RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF
HEALTHY AGING FOR THE ALLIANCE FOR BETTER LONG-TERM CARE
OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

- 1 This resolution would authorize the appropriation of the sum of \$100,000 to the Rhode
- 2 Island Office Of Healthy Aging for the RI Long-Term Care Ombudsman program.

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