

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 362

Short Title: Strengthen Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Alexander (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 24, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF AGING, TO STRENGTHEN THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM BY FUNDING ADDITIONAL REGIONAL OMBUDSMAN POSITIONS AND DIRECTING A STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON STATUTORY CHANGES NECESSARY TO IMPROVE THE PROGRAM AND THE SYSTEM OF VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING THE PROGRAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging, the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in recurring funds for each year of the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium to be allocated and used as follows:

- (1) The sum of one hundred forty-five thousand dollars (\$145,000) for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and the sum of one hundred six thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$106,750) for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to support the operational expenses of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, including costs associated with equipment, supplies, and transportation.
- (2) The sum of eight hundred fifty-five thousand dollars (\$855,000) for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and the sum of eight hundred ninety-three thousand two hundred fifty dollars (\$893,250) for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to fund nine additional full-time Regional Ombudsman positions to move North Carolina toward national standards for long-term care ombudsman programs. These nine positions shall be dedicated to the Regional Ombudsman Programs within the Area Agencies on Aging most in need of additional ombudsman support, as determined by the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

SECTION 2. The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging, in collaboration with the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Regional Offices of Long-Term Care Ombudsman within the Area Agencies on Aging, and other interested stakeholders, shall study and make recommendations to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the Fiscal Research Division on statutory changes necessary to improve and strengthen the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and the system of Community Advisory Committee volunteers supporting the Program.

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 2025.

