



**COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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The Honorable Assembly Member Eloise Gomez Reyes
State Capitol, Room 4015
Sacramento, CA 95814

Fax 916-319-2147

Dear Assembly Member Reyes:

On behalf of the County of Lake, we write to thank you for authoring AB 550, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Funding.

AB 550 revises the Department of Aging Funding Formula (Welfare & Institutions Code Section 9719.5) for the 35 local Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman Programs from the 1989 allocation of \$35,000 to a \$100,000 local program base.

An adequately funded Ombudsman Program is a vital part of the long-term care safety net. When Ombudsman Programs are able to fulfill the State and Federal service mandates, residents of care facilities benefit with higher quality of life and care, and the State reduces costs by fielding complaints that would otherwise be referred directly to the licensing agencies.

Having well trained certified LTC Ombudsmen in California's long-term care facilities is the single most cost effective opportunity to prevent complaints of neglect and abuse from occurring. With a growing population of Californians receiving Long-Term Care, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

The State and Federally mandated purpose of the LTC 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.

LTC Ombudsmen serve as eyes, ears and advocates for residents, particularly the 60% of residents without family members visiting to observe care and report problems.

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 are in strong support of AB 550, an important piece of legislation that protects facility residents by adequately funding the local Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs.

Sincerely,

Jeff Smith, Chair