



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 10, 2026

House Bill 671

Nursing Facilities - Medicaid Quality Assessment - Funding of Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman
House Appropriations Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 671 requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill at least 3% of the special funds collected from the Medicaid quality assessment imposed on certain nursing facilities to fund the operations of the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman plays an essential role in protecting the rights, health, and safety of more than 54,000 residents living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities across Maryland.¹ Through 19 local programs, the office investigates complaints, educates residents and families about their rights, advocates on behalf of residents, supports resident and family councils, and works collaboratively with facilities to resolve concerns related to quality of care.² These services depend on consistent and predictable funding to remain accessible, responsive, and effective.

This legislation appropriately directs at least 3% of the funds collected under this section to support the ongoing operations of the Maryland Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. This dedicated funding is critical to ensuring the stability, independence, and effectiveness of an

¹ <https://aging.maryland.gov/pages/state-long-term-care-ombudsman.aspx#:~:text=Resident%20Advocate,approximately%203%2C300%20complaints%20from%20resident>

² <https://aging.maryland.gov/pages/state-long-term-care-ombudsman.aspx#:~:text=Resident%20Advocate,approximately%203%2C300%20complaints%20from%20resident>

office that serves as a primary safeguard for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

From the perspective of Catholic social teaching, persons of all ages possess inherent dignity and deserve respect, protection, and the ability to participate meaningfully in community life. Older adults are not burdens to be managed but vital members of our communities whose lives, experiences, and voices matter. Ensuring strong advocacy and oversight in long-term care settings affirms this dignity by empowering residents to direct their own lives, understand their rights, and receive care that respects their humanity.

Continued funding for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman helps ensure that Maryland's aging population can enter later life with dignity, safety, and community engagement. By sustaining this critical program, the State affirms its commitment to honoring older adults as valued members of society and to protecting the dignity and well-being of those who rely on long-term care services.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 671**.

Thank you for your consideration.