

LeadingAge Maryland - 2026 - SB 340 - LTC Ombudsma

Uploaded by: Aaron Greenfield

Position: FAV



PO Box 34
Sykesville, MD 21784

TO: House Appropriations Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 340, Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman - Mandatory Appropriation
DATE: April 7, 2026
POSITION: Favorable

LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 340 Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman - Mandatory Appropriation.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 150 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Members of LeadingAge Maryland provide health care, housing, and services to more than 20,000 older persons each year.

Senate Bill 340 requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill a minimum \$2,000,000 appropriation for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman from certain money remitted by managed care organizations.

The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman is essential to safeguarding the health, safety, welfare, and rights of Marylanders who reside in nursing facilities and other long-term care settings. As an independent advocate, the Ombudsman investigates complaints, resolves disputes, ensures access to legal and administrative remedies, and provides critical oversight that complements the efforts of providers and regulatory agencies. This office represents the frontline defense against abuse, neglect, and inadequate care, and its work directly contributes to the quality of life for our state's most vulnerable residents.

SB 340 appropriately recognizes that such a vital consumer protection function cannot be subject to the uncertainties of the annual budget process. By requiring the Governor to include a mandatory appropriation of at least \$2,000,000 from managed care organization remittances—and providing for a general fund backfill if those revenues are insufficient—this legislation ensures that the Ombudsman's office maintains the financial stability necessary to carry out its statutory duties. Dedicated funding ensures that resident advocacy does not compete with other

discretionary priorities for limited general fund dollars. It affirms that protecting long-term care residents is a core state responsibility, not an optional service.

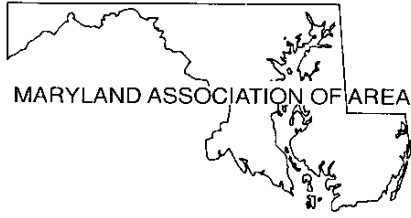
For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 340.

M4A - 2026 SB 340 FAV - Funding of Office of the L

Uploaded by: Ann Ciekot

Position: FAV

M 4 A



MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

*Karen Winkowski
President
Representing Harford County
Office on Aging*

*Erin Bird, Vice President
Representing Cecil County
Department of Community Services*

*Ofelia Ross Ott, Treasurer
Representing Howard County
Office on Aging and Independence*

*Heang Tan, Secretary
Representing Baltimore County
Department of Aging*

House Appropriations Committee

April 7, 2026

Senate Bill 340 - Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman - Mandatory Appropriation

Support

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Area Agencies on Aging (M4A), we respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 340, which establishes an ongoing funding mechanism for the Maryland Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

Maryland's long-term care system serves a growing and increasingly vulnerable population. Across the State, there are 220 nursing homes and 1,622 licensed assisted living facilities, representing 54,287 beds. Residents in these settings rely on the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to protect their health, safety, welfare, and rights.

M4A represents the State's 19 Area Agencies on Aging, each of which houses a local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Ombudsmen serve as independent, resident-directed advocates who investigate complaints, provide information and assistance, and play a critical preventive role by educating residents, families, and providers about residents' rights.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2025, Maryland's Long-Term Care Ombudsmen investigated and resolved 3,978 complaints, with 86 percent resolved to the satisfaction of the resident. Ombudsmen made more than 7,200 visits to nursing homes and assisted living facilities and provided over 7,000 instances of information and assistance to residents and families. They also supported resident and family councils and conducted community education across the State.

Despite the essential nature of this work, funding for the Ombudsman Program—and for the Area Agencies on Aging that administer it locally—has remained flat for more than a decade and far below

(over)

what is needed to meet current demand. This chronic underfunding has constrained local capacity, limiting the frequency of facility visits, slowing response times, and reducing outreach, even as facilities, complaints, and resident needs have continued to grow.

The most frequent complaints raised by residents involve discharge or eviction, medications, personal care, residents' rights, and abuse or neglect—issues that directly affect safety and dignity. Ombudsmen often resolve these concerns before they escalate, benefiting residents, families, facilities, and the State as a whole.

For these reasons, M4A strongly supports Senate Bill 340 and respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report.

Who is M4A?

The nineteen member organizations of Maryland's Association of Area Agencies on Aging (M4A) serve Maryland's older and disabled citizens, providing a range of cost-effective state, federal and locally funded programs that help individuals remain secure in the community with dignity, independence, and choice as they age. M4A and its associated Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) represent the "front line" in Maryland's challenge to meet the complex and varied needs of well over one million older adults statewide. M4A's goal is to ensure coordination and communication with all partners on all aspects of senior service planning to enhance opportunity and availability to all eligible citizens.

SB0340 Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman - Ma

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0340 –Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman - Mandatory Appropriation – FAVORABLE

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hettleman

Committee: Appropriations

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Jessica Gorski, Executive Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Gorski, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0340 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations representing more than 30,000 Marylanders across every legislative district. Our mission is to promote legislation that strengthens education, healthcare, public safety, environmental protection, and social justice—ensuring that every Marylander has access to the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.

SB0340 advances that mission by strengthening oversight, accountability, and protections for older Marylanders living in nursing facilities.

This bill 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 support the operations of the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. This dedicated funding stream ensures that the Ombudsman’s Office—charged with advocating for residents, investigating complaints, and safeguarding the rights and well-being of individuals in long-term care—has the resources necessary to fulfill its critical responsibilities.

These provisions are both timely and essential.

The Ombudsman process is one of the most important safeguards Maryland has for protecting older adults in nursing facilities. Ombudspersons serve as independent advocates who listen to residents, investigate concerns, and intervene when care, safety, or dignity is at risk. They provide a trusted, accessible avenue for residents and families who may feel powerless navigating complex systems or raising concerns within

a facility. Their work not only resolves individual issues but also identifies systemic problems, elevates resident voices, and drives improvements across the long-term care sector.

Ensuring the Ombudsman's Office is adequately funded is a direct investment in the health, safety, and dignity of Maryland's older adults. As our state's aging population grows and nursing facilities continue to face staffing and operational challenges, the need for strong, well-resourced oversight has never been greater.

By guaranteeing a stable, predictable source of funding, SB0340 strengthens the state's ability to:

- Conduct timely investigations of complaints,
- Monitor facility conditions and resident safety,
- Support families navigating complex care systems, and
- Ensure that nursing facilities meet their obligations to provide safe, dignified, and high-quality care.

This bill also reflects responsible fiscal policy. The Medicaid quality assessment is already collected from nursing facilities; directing a small portion of these funds to the Ombudsman's Office ensures that the revenue generated within the long-term care system is reinvested to protect the very residents it is meant to serve.

SB0340 aligns squarely with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. It strengthens healthcare oversight, protects vulnerable residents, and promotes fairness, accountability, and community well-being. Ensuring that the Ombudsman's Office is adequately funded is not only a matter of good governance—it is a matter of dignity and justice for Maryland's older adults.

We urge the Committee to support this thoughtful, necessary, and community-centered legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on SB0340.**

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_SB340_HouseCross.

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

April 7, 2026

Senate Bill 340
Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman – Mandatory Appropriation
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.

Senate Bill 340 requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill a minimum appropriation for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman from certain money remitted by managed care organizations and under certain circumstances, general funds.

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 directs \$2,000,000 from remitted funds by managed care organizations 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 office that serves as a primary safeguard for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

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

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

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 **SB 340**.

Thank you for your consideration.

NASW Maryland - 2026 SB 340 FAV - Funding of Offic

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV



**Testimony before the House Appropriations Committee
April 7, 2026**

**Senate Bill 340 - Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman - Mandatory Appropriation
SUPPORT**

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), we wish to express our support for Senate Bill 340 - Nursing Facilities - Medicaid Quality Assessment - Funding of Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

As social workers serving older adults, we are in favor of this bill because we understand the value a Long Term Care Ombudsman brings to residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. This bill would provide much-needed additional funding that would strengthen the program.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program was mandated by the Federal Older Americans Act in 1978 to investigate complaints, protect the rights, and improve the quality of life for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Ombudsmen encourage self-advocacy by providing information, assistance, and support to residents. They also provide information and education to staff on issues that pertain to resident rights. They often work closely with the facility social workers. In fact, it is often the social worker who enlists the support of the Ombudsman for the residents or make sure the residents are aware of their services.

A Long-Term Care Ombudsman role is complex. The Ombudsman listens to a resident's' concerns and develops a resolution plan that is workable for the resident and staff. Ombudsmen support residents' families, who value their impartiality. Ombudsmen also conduct drop-in visits to ensure that residents are aware of their services, and they attend resident council meetings to educate about resident rights often in creative ways like Resident Rights Bingo.

Ombudsmen are invaluable in safeguarding resident rights. Unfortunately, there are not enough of them to provide coverage for the over 54,000 residents across 1,850 facilities in our state. Today the Maryland Department of Aging heavily utilizes volunteer Ombudsmen to advocate for residents, but more funding is needed to hire additional professional staff.

Senate Bill 340 would ensure minimum funding for the operation of the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman. With additional funds it would be possible to hire additional Long Term Care Ombudsmen so more of our vulnerable long-term care residents can receive the valuable support the Ombudsman provides. For all these reasons, we ask for your favorable report on Senate Bill 340.

Respectfully,

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW
Executive Director, NASW-MD

SB 340 - X - FAV - APP - ALZ Association.pdf

Uploaded by: Megan Peters

Position: FAV



Bill: SB 340 - Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman - Mandatory Appropriation

Committee: House Appropriations Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: April 7, 2026

On behalf of the 127,200 Marylanders living with Alzheimer's disease and the many others with another type of dementia, the Alzheimer's Association supports SB 340. This bill will strengthen the Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program by requiring an annual appropriation to support operations. This stable funding commitment is essential to protect the health, safety, and well-being of residents living with dementia in long-term care settings.

Marylanders living with dementia make up a substantial portion of Maryland's long-term care population. In 2025, an estimated 46% of nursing home residents and 42% of individuals in residential care facilities (such as assisted living) were living with dementia.¹ These individuals rely on the Ombudsman Program to investigate complaints, safeguard resident rights, and advocate for individuals who often cannot advocate for themselves.

The Ombudsman Program's Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Annual Report highlights the immense demand for their services. In FY25 alone, the Program investigated 3,978 complaints and completed 7,252 visits to nursing homes and assisted living homes. These numbers underscore how critically residents depend on the Ombudsman Program, especially individuals living with dementia who may have difficulty communicating concerns about abuse, neglect, poor care transitions, medication errors, or involuntary discharges.

By ensuring stable funding, SB 340 directly strengthens Maryland's long-term care system and protects thousands of residents living with dementia. For these reasons, the Alzheimer's Association urges a favorable report on SB 340. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org with any questions.

¹ 2025 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, <https://www.alz.org/getmedia/ef8f48f9-ad36-48ea-87f9-b74034635c1e/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>

SB 340 - X - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Megan Peters

Position: FAV



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

*Baltimore Jewish
Council*

*Catholic Charities of
Baltimore*

*Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council*

Church of the Brethren

*Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland*

*Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County*

*Lutheran Office on
Public Policy in
Maryland*

*Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging*

*Maryland Catholic
Conference*

*Mental Health
Association of Maryland*

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

*National Association of
Social Workers,
Maryland Chapter*

Presbytery of Baltimore

*The Coordinating
Center*

*MSCAN Co-Chairs:
Carol Lienhard
Megan Peters
410-921-9005*

The Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN) is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that support policies that meet the housing, health, and quality of care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

MSCAN supports SB 340. Older adults in Maryland deserve safe, high-quality long-term care and access to an independent advocate when concerns arise. SB 340 strengthens the Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program by requiring an annual appropriation to support Ombudsman operations. This reliable funding source is critical to protecting the health, safety, dignity, and rights of long-term care residents.

The Ombudsman Program is a federally mandated service under the Older Americans Act, operating statewide to advocate for more than 54,000 Marylanders living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Demand for Ombudsman services continues to grow alongside the state's aging population. In FY25 alone, ombudsmen made 7,252 visits, provided 7,013 instances of information and assistance, and investigated and resolved 3,978 complaints made by or on behalf of residents. These activities are essential to ensuring resident rights, resolving concerns quickly, and supporting facility staff in maintaining high-quality care.

Despite these critical responsibilities, the Ombudsman Program has been flat-funded for more than a decade, even as the number and complexity of resident needs have increased. Maryland must ensure a stable, state-level funding stream to protect residents and maintain essential advocacy services. SB 340 will provide this stability.

A well-resourced Ombudsman Program benefits the entire long-term care system. Ombudsmen help resolve issues before they escalate, reduce regulatory complaints, support families, and improve communication between residents and facilities. Research shows that states investing in their Ombudsman Programs see improved care outcomes and stronger resident protections.

For these reasons MSCAN urges a favorable report on SB 340.

SB0340 - crossfiled bill - FAV - Office of the Lon

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0340_Crossfiled Bill_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

04/07/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON CROSS-FILED BILL SB#0340- POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and members of the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of cross-filed bill SB#0340, **Nursing Facilities - Medicaid Quality Assessment - Funding of Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman**

I submitted testimony on the cross-filed bill version heard in your chamber. That was bill HB0671 as amended which passed the House 131-2. This is the crossover bill from the other chamber SB0387. I urge you to support this bill which passed the Senate with amendments by the vote of 42-0. Please reconcile these bills and pass them in both chambers after a favorable vote in your committee.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on cross-filed bill SB#0340.

SB340_FAV_Hettleman APP.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV

SHELLY HETTLEMAN
Legislative District 11
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Chair, Rules Committee
Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees
Capital Budget
Health and Human Services
Chair, Pensions

Joint Committees
Senate Chair, Audit and Evaluation
Senate Chair, Pensions

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN
SB 340 - NURSING FACILITIES - MEDICAID QUALITY ASSESSMENT - FUNDING
OF OFFICE OF THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and members of the Appropriations Committee, I am here to present and ask your support for **SB 340 - Nursing Facilities - Medicaid Quality Assessment - Funding of Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman**.

The Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman program exists to protect the health, safety, dignity, and autonomy of older adults and individuals with disabilities who live in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other long-term care settings. Ombudsmen advocate for residents in situations including routine quality-of-life concerns such as choice, independence, and access to services, as well as serious cases of neglect and abuse.

Last year alone, Maryland Ombudsmen:

- made **7,252 visits** to nursing homes and assisted living facilities,
- investigated, verified and resolved **3,978 Complaints**, and
- provided **173 Community Education events**.

Behind these numbers are real people. For example, ombudsmen are often called when residents are told that staff “do not have time” to assist with basic needs. These situations may seem minor, however, they can easily escalate into neglect or harm if there is no early intervention. Ombudsman advocates are often the only independent voice residents have.

These concerns are compounded by an emerging and deeply troubling issue in Maryland: the proliferation of unlicensed assisted living facilities existing and operating outside of regulatory oversight. Investigations and reports have revealed that vulnerable older adults are sometimes placed in unlicensed settings where protections and accountability are limited.^{1,2} In these environments, residents are at a heightened risk of neglect, exploitation, and abuse. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is often one of the only entities positioned to identify, investigate, and advocate for residents in such settings. As these challenges grow, so does the demand for Ombudsman services, but without a corresponding increase in resources.

What Maryland is facing today is only the beginning. The state is in the midst of a profound demographic shift, as state data shows that Maryland's **population age 65 and older will grow to more than 25% of the state's residents** within the next two decades.³ At the same time, the complexity of care is increasing, with more older adults living with multiple chronic conditions, cognitive impairments, and advanced care needs that demand sustained oversight and advocacy. The rapid growth in the older adult population will place an unprecedented strain on an already under-resourced system, ultimately impacting those least able to advocate for themselves including low-income seniors, individuals with disabilities, and residents of long-term care facilities. In order to meet the needs of the growing older population, deliberate investment into the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is essential as a means to ensure that vulnerable residents are seen, heard, and protected.

Today, Maryland's Ombudsman Program is funded through a combination of state and federal dollars. Current funding totals roughly **\$1.5 million**, with approximately:

- **\$400,000 from the federal government**, and
- **\$1.1 million from the State of Maryland**.

This funding level is already insufficient to meet demand. At the same time, there are significant and credible concerns about potential federal funding reductions due to broader changes to federal Health and Human Services budget priorities. Without a dedicated, sustainable funding source, the Ombudsman Program remains vulnerable at a time when Maryland's aging population is rapidly growing, and the complexity of long-term care is increasing.

Maryland already collects a Medicaid quality assessment, referred to as a "bed tax", on nursing facilities. This assessment is approximately \$32 per Medicaid bed per day and generates hundreds of millions of dollars annually. In Fiscal Year 2024, this assessment generated approximately **\$198 million**, which was used to reimburse nursing facilities for Medicaid resident care, and support pay-for-performance initiatives. Senate Bill 340 proposes a modest, targeted budget reform by allocating **just 3% of the quality assessment fund** to the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. This would yield an estimated **\$3–5 million annually**, dramatically strengthening oversight and advocacy without undermining the core purpose of the fund.

Some may argue that every dollar of the Medicaid quality assessment should flow back to providers. However, SB 340 recognizes that quality care requires funding for facilities in conjunction with funding for independent oversight. With nursing facilities receiving substantial funding through Medicaid, it is both reasonable and necessary that a small portion of that money be dedicated to directly protecting the residents whose care those funds are meant to support. Therefore, I urge a favorable report from the committee.

1. Collins G. Senior 'trafficking': The shadow industry Maryland won't shut down. 2025. Accessed Feb 4, 2026. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/2025/11/12/senior-trafficking/>

2. Collins G. Senior trafficking: Maryland leaders urge action on oversight, transparency. 2026. Accessed Feb 4, 2026. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/?p=11950306/>

3. Collins G. Maryland's senior wave is coming - and oversight is already cracking. Updated 2025. Accessed Feb 4, 2026WJLA Web site. <https://wjla.com/news/local/marylands-senior-wave-is-coming-and-oversight-is-already-cracking>

DBM LOC SB340 Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsm

Uploaded by: Dana Phillips

Position: INFO

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor



YAAKOV "JAKE" WEISSMANN
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

TITLE: SB 340 Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman - Mandatory Appropriation

DATE: April 7th

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: Letter of Concern

SUMMARY OF BILL: Senate Bill 340 establishes a mandatory appropriation to support the operations of the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman in the Department of Aging. As amended by the Senate Finance Committee, the bill requires the Governor to include an appropriation of \$2,000,000 for the Office, sourced from money remitted by managed care organizations under COMAR 10.67.04.19-4(I) in the second immediately preceding fiscal year. If the total amount remitted by managed care organizations is less than \$2,000,000, the bill requires a general fund appropriation equal to the difference.

EXPLANATION: This legislation establishes a mandated appropriation, increasing expenditures by at least \$2,000,000 annually beginning in Fiscal Year 2027, and exposes the State to general fund liability if managed care organization remittances fall short of that threshold. The non-supplantation requirement further constrains budget flexibility by locking in baseline funding levels independent of overall fiscal conditions.

Given the significant uncertainty in federal policy and the escalating fiscal shortfalls forecasted through Fiscal Year 2028, the Department urges caution against legislation that increases expenditures or diverts revenue without sustainable funding offsets. In light of the current fiscal crisis, the State must remain disciplined and strategic in its funding decisions to protect essential services for all Marylanders.

The Department recognizes the important work of the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and supports adequate funding for long-term care advocacy. However, the Department believes that funding decisions of this nature are best addressed through the annual budget process, where the full fiscal picture can be considered and resources can be allocated

consistent with the State's overall priorities and capacity. For these reasons, the Department of Budget and Management respectfully submits this letter of concern regarding Senate Bill 340.

**For additional information, contact Dana Phillips at
(410) 260-6068 or dana.phillips@maryland.gov**

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<http://dbm.maryland.gov>

SB340 LOI Crossover.pdf

Uploaded by: Irnise Williams

Position: INFO

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Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
Deputy Attorney General

SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Deputy Attorney General



STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
HEALTH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY UNIT

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

WILLIAM D. GRUHN
Division Chief

PETER V. BERNS
General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief of Staff

IRNISE WILLIAMS
Deputy Unit Director

April 3, 2026

To: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
Appropriations Committee

From: Irnise F. Williams, Deputy Director, Health Education and Advocacy Unit

Re: Senate Bill 340 – Nursing Facilities – Medicaid Quality Assessment – Funding of
Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman - **LETTER OF INFORMATION**

The Office of the Attorney General’s Health Education and Advocacy Unit (HEAU) submits a letter of information on SB340. This bill provides a stable state funding stream for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman by requiring 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 help fund the operations of the Office.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is an advocacy program for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Maryland. From the [Program’s annual FY2024](#) report:

Authorized under the Older Americans Act, the Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for the health, safety, well-being, and rights of residents living in assisted living and nursing homes. Ombudsmen work at the direction of the resident and only take action with the resident’s consent. In Maryland, there are 220 nursing homes and 1,622 licensed assisted living homes totaling over 53,907 long-term care beds.

In FY2024, 3,312 complaints were investigated, verified and resolved by Long-Term Care Ombudsmen. 84% of complaints were resolved to the satisfaction of the residents.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a critical safeguard for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Regular visits by ombudsmen ensure that residents understand their rights and have access to advocacy and support when issues arise. While facilities usually strive to provide quality care and quality of life, many residents have complex medical and psychosocial needs that cannot always be fully met by the facility alone. These gaps often lead to serious

concerns that require time, expertise, and independent investigation—services the Ombudsman Program uniquely provides.

The importance of this program is underscored by findings from the [Government Accountability Office](#), which highlight several challenges:

- Increasing complexity of resident needs, including mental health, substance misuse, and cognitive impairment, which require specialized advocacy and resources.
- Growth in the number of assisted living facilities, significantly expanding the workload for ombudsmen.
- Resource limitations, including funding and staffing shortages, make it difficult to meet demand and maintain effective oversight.

Additionally, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is facing significant federal funding threats, making the program dependent on political conditions. Federal funding had been flat for many years. Maryland's aging population is projected to grow significantly over the next two decades. Without adequate, sustainable funding of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, many older Marylanders may lack access to critical resources and advocacy needed to navigate the challenges of living in assisted living facilities or nursing homes.

Without adequate funding, residents risk losing access to a vital resource that protects their rights, addresses complaints, and ensures accountability in long-term care settings. Investing in the Ombudsman Program is not optional, it is essential to uphold the dignity, safety, and well-being of some of our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for considering this information as you review SB340.