

2023-24 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

#4 Allocate an additional \$1.5M in recurring funds for 11 additional long-term care ombudsmen.

Ombudsmen serve as advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, providing protections for vulnerable elders. The current state appropriation for this program is \$918.8K.

The Background

- Ombudsman in the long-term care (LTC) setting are state-trained individuals who advocate for the rights of residents in long-term care facilities.
- The importance of their role was heightened by facility visitation restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- For those with a loved one in a LTC setting, knowing the regional LTC ombudsman can make a huge difference in their experience with the facility.
- In 1995, the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine (NASIOM) recommended one full-time equivalent (FTE) paid ombudsman per every 2,000 LTC beds.

The Issues

- NC has more than 90,000 LTC beds and 35 approved FTE ombudsmen staff positions.
- Based on NASIOM recommendation of one ombudsman for every 2,000 beds, NC should have 46 FTE ombudsmen positions.
- NC needs 11 additional FTE ombudsman positions at an expense of \$1.5 million in recurring funds to meet best practice staffing standards and the increased demands of LTC ombudsman roles.

The Solution

Allocate \$1.5M in recurring funds to fund 11 additional ombudsmen positions. Distribute these funds to the regions most in need of additional ombudsman, based on the number of beds per region.