

SB 58 B STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Human Services and Housing

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Meeting Dates: 5/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Long Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) to appoint Residential Facilities Ombudsman (RFO). Prescribes duties and powers of RFO. Requires LTCO and RFO to enter into agreement for protecting confidentiality of records. Grants immunity to good faith complainants. Renames "Residential Facilities Advisory Committee" as "Residential Ombudsman and Public Guardianship Advisory Board." Permits RFO to access records of resident who is unable to provide consent and does not have legal representation. Directs LTCO to fill RFO vacancy within 60 days. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Current Oregon law establishes the office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) as an independent advocate for individuals who reside in long term care facilities. The LTCO is tasked with investigating and resolving complaints against residential facilities, interviewing facility residents and employees and providing other services to long term care residents. The Residential Facilities Advisory Committee nominates candidates to serve as LTCO, consults on rules adopted by the LTCO, monitors LTCO programs and advises the Governor and the legislature.

Senate Bill 58 B requires the LTCO to appoint a Residential Facilities Ombudsman (RFO) who serves at the pleasure of the LTCO, and further directs the LTCO to fill any vacancy in the RFO position within 60 days. The measure prescribes the powers and duties of the RFO and clarifies the existing LTCO statutes to incorporate and reflect the newly established RFO position. The measure requires the LTCO and RFO to enter into an agreement to protect the confidentiality of records, and require the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide specified monthly data in a format established by OHA, DHS and the RFO. Additionally, the measure grants civil and criminal immunity to individuals who make complaints or participate in investigations in good faith.

In addition, Senate Bill 58 B renames the "Residential Facilities Advisory Committee" as the "Residential Ombudsman and Public Guardianship Advisory Board." The measure permits the LTCO access to a resident's records if the LTCO has reasonable cause to believe that a resident's legal representative is not acting in the resident's best interest, and permits RFO to access records of resident who is unable to provide consent and does not have legal representation.