



February 4, 2019

Co- Chair Nosse, Co-Chair Beyer, members of the committee, my name is Kyndall Mason; I am a political and policy strategist for SEIU Local 503, focusing on long term care. Our Local represents more than 30,000 long term care workers, many of whom work in nursing homes and increasingly, assisted living facilities and residential care facilities. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of those workers in regards to the Long Term Care Ombudsman office, specifically the Residential Facilities program.

SEIU advocated for this specific program, as we saw many group and residential settings that were left out of the scope of the Long Term Care Ombudsman's crucial work. Essentially, in many settings, residents of these facilities, who are often forgotten or cast aside, are left with no one to advocate for them, save for the workers providing supports. The job, in these settings, is hard and requires emotional and physical labor that is often not compensated at a rate that provides the worker a living wage. Feeling the weight of advocacy in addition to the pressures of an under-appreciated and difficult job can be too much, and it is too much.

Since the creation of the Residential Facilities Ombudsman we have enjoyed a strong relationship with the office. We have been able to collaborate and identify areas of need and ways in which we can work together to help make better advocates out of workers, and to engage with the communities in which these facilities exist. We as an organization are looking forward to many years of collaboration to make these settings better places to live and to work.

Thank you for your time today.

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