Dear Senator/Representative [LEGISLATORS NAME]

[NAME/AGENCY] is requesting your support for additional resources to assist the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. The Long Term Care Ombudsmen are a neutral third party who works with residents of licensed long-term care facilities with the goal of improving care and quality for residents and advocating for the resident's wishes. Ombudsmen not only identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by residents of long-term care facilities, but they also provide information to residents, facilities, and the public through outreach and education along with many other tasks.

In Michigan, there are 20 local ombudsmen tasked with addressing complaints from 4,610 facilities and 103,549 resident beds. Michigan is falling behind other states in the ratio of ombudsmen to beds with the state-wide average being 1:5,177 whereas the national average is 1:2,236. **With ombudsmen in Michigan serving more than double the national average,** **residents in this state are receiving less attention from ombudsmen leading to fewer complaints being addressed, fewer preventative measures to facilities, and greater escalation of issues that could have been solved if local ombudsmen had greater capacity**.

**To properly staff the Ombudsman Program to reach the recommended 1:2,000 ratio, 33 more FTEs are required throughout the state at a cost of $3 million.** In FY21, the average ombudsman fund allocation per bed in Michigan was $19.47 whereas the national average was $49.47 meaning the same resident of a long-term care facility in Michigan receives $30 less than the same resident elsewhere in the country.

In addition to increased funding, the Ombudsman Funding Formula that distributes funding throughout the state has not been updated since 1987. Using data more than 30 years old does not properly reflect where residents are located throughout the state and is not representative of local needs. Also, the current formula only considers nursing home beds, not Adult Foster Care (AFC) and Homes for the Aged (HFA) beds, although ombudsmen are responsible for these residents as well.

[NAME/AGENCY] encourages the legislature to support the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.

* Encourage the inclusion of $3 million in additional funding in the Executive Budget to support properly staffing the Ombudsman Program in the Executive Budget.
* Include a minimum of $3 million in additional funding to support properly staffing the Ombudsman Program in the FY2025 budget.
* Instruct the Commission on Services to the aging to update the Ombudsman Funding Formula once funds are increased.

Michigan’s older adults in long-term care facilities deserve increased support from the legislature. **This increased support would assist older adults, facilities, and the state by preventing and addressing complaints before they become larger issues.** Thank you for your consideration of support for this proposal. Please feel free to reach out to me at [EMAIL] or [PHONE NUMBER].

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[CONTACT INFORMATION]