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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5606**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Bateman, Hasegawa, and Nobles)

READ FIRST TIME 02/21/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to providing sufficient funding for the  
2 Washington state long-term care ombuds program; adding a new section  
3 to chapter 43.190 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

6 (1) Residents of licensed long-term care facilities are entitled  
7 to a specific set of rights under chapter 70.129 RCW, including the  
8 right to be treated with courtesy, the opportunity to exercise  
9 reasonable control over life decisions, and the right to receive care  
10 in a manner and in an environment that maintains or enhances their  
11 dignity and respect in full recognition of their individuality;

12 (2) All residents of licensed long-term care facilities are  
13 classified as vulnerable adults under chapter 74.34 RCW;

14 (3) The long-term care ombuds program is mandated under chapter  
15 43.190 RCW to promote and protect the rights of residents, including  
16 identifying, investigating, and resolving complaints made by or on  
17 behalf of residents of long-term care facilities which may adversely  
18 affect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of these individuals;

19 (4) All residents of licensed long-term care facilities are  
20 entitled to ombuds services under chapter 70.129 RCW and the older  
21 Americans act;

1 (5) A 2020 report from the department of commerce found funding  
2 was insufficient to meet the ratio of one full-time ombuds for every  
3 2,000 residents as recommended by the institute of medicine; and

4 (6) The number of individuals living in licensed long-term care  
5 facilities is expected to continue to grow, requiring additional  
6 resources for the long-term care ombuds program.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.190  
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) By June 1, 2026, and each subsequent June 1st in even-  
10 numbered years, the long-term care ombuds program shall, in  
11 partnership with the department of commerce, and consulting with the  
12 office of financial management, develop a funding recommendation that  
13 provides adequate and appropriate funding for the long-term care  
14 ombuds program to allow it to fulfill its statutory obligations,  
15 including any legislation impacting residents of licensed long-term  
16 care facilities that will require additional work from the program.  
17 The funding recommendation must:

18 (a) Provide sufficient funding to achieve the ratio in alignment  
19 with the most recent recommendation by the institute of medicine;

20 (b) Account for the growth in licensed long-term care beds, as  
21 forecast by the caseload forecast council established in RCW  
22 43.88C.010;

23 (c) Account for any inflationary factors present in the consumer  
24 price index; and

25 (d) Account for any administrative needs for the department of  
26 commerce.

27 (2) After June 1, 2026, and in each subsequent even-numbered  
28 year, the department of commerce shall submit the funding  
29 recommendation developed in subsection (1) of this section for  
30 consideration to the office of financial management and the chairs of  
31 the fiscal committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over the  
32 operating budget.

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