



Proponent Testimony for SB 88 – Requiring Dementia Training for the State Long Term Care Ombudsman's office

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Thank you, Chair Carpenter and members of the House Health and Human Services Committee, for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of SB 88.

My name is Jamie Gideon. I am the Kansas Director of Public Policy for the Alzheimer's Association. The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. In Kansas, we have two chapters which together serve all 105 counties.

One of the principal purposes of the ombudsman program is to investigate and resolve complaints made by residents or on behalf of residents in long-term care facilities. If an ombudsman is investigating a complaint from a resident's family and that resident has dementia, it would benefit the resident, the resident's family, the nursing home and the LTC Ombudsman if the ombudsman has the proper training to communicate with that resident and understand the behaviors of those with the disease.

This bill looks to address the gaps in training that are brought about when new ombudsman are appointed.

The topics included in the bill are very basic but essential and are the same topics in most basic dementia training that the Alzheimer's Association provides to ombudsman across the country. These topics provide a good foundation for their work with residents in long-term care and their families.

There is a true need for this type of training and it's increasing. 65% of nursing home residents have some type of cognitive impairment. Couple that with the fact that the number of those living with Alzheimer's is due to increase by 41% by 2050.

In addition, there is no cost for this training. In fact, cost savings can be shown through staff training. Proper training helps to reduce errors, waste, and downtime. Resources for training can be found through the Alzheimer's Association and the National Long Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center.

This training will help ombudsman provide better guidance to families navigating the challenges of dementia care, and work more effectively with facility staff to create a better environment for residents.

It has been mentioned in previous testimony that the ACL (Administration for Community Living) already requires this training, so it isn't needed. But in fact, according to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman





Program Training Standards published by the ACL, curriculum content must include but not limited to the following subject matter knowledge – “Introduction to common health issues individuals using Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) may experience.” Alzheimer's disease and related dementias is one of those health issues listed. There are no required topics or specifics regarding the Alzheimer’s training listed by the ACL.

The Kansas State Legislature should act now to help the long-term care ombudsman staff better serve residents in long-term care settings. It is important to do everything we can to protect the most vulnerable in our community and those living with Alzheimer’s are among those that should be protected. I will stand at the appropriate time for questions.

