

Madame Chair Gossage and Members of the Senate Public Health Committee:

My name is Lorrie Beck and I'm testifying as a proponent of SB 88 - Requiring Dementia Training for the State Long Term Care Ombudsman's office.

As a former Caregiver for my mother – who died on Christmas Day, 2022 from Alzheimer's Disease – and a volunteer Community Educator with the Alzheimer's Association, I believe I can speak to the need to require Ombudsman staff and volunteers receive training that ensures the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents living in long-term care such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other adult care homes throughout the state of Kansas.

The LTC Ombudsman supports this bill and there is no fiscal note attached to SB88.

As the staff and volunteers with the LTC Ombudsman office investigate complaints, it's vital they have the skills, knowledge, and the ability to determine if the complaint has merit, and that they know ways to help residents and their families deal with issues such as:

- * Understanding the warning signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's and other dementias;
- * Knowledge of person-centered dementia care;
- * Communicating effectively with individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias;
- * Recognizing behavioral symptoms, including alternatives to physical and chemical restraints; and
- * Addressing specific aspects of safety, such as wandering, aggression, confusion, and suspicion.

I've taught all of these classes to businesses and non-profit organizations, and those simply interested in knowing more about Alzheimer's disease and all forms of dementia.

I retired 10 years early so I could care for Mom in my home, which I did for nearly 5 years before her behaviors changed due to Alzheimer's disease. My sister and I placed Mom in an Assisted Living Memory Care facility where staff received training on how to deal with residents with Alzheimer's disease. Staff were well versed on how to keep the residents calm, engaged, safe, and they treated the residents with the love and respect due these seniors. Our LTC Ombudsman staff and volunteers should be equally educated and trained.

I urge you to support SB88. Thank you for your time.

Lorrie Beck