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TESTIMONY

Senate Judiciary Committee
Chairman Jeff King

Presented by Barbara Hickert
Kansas State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
January 23, 2013

Chairman King and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of Senate Bill 19. The State Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman Program represents the rights of individuals residing in Adult Care Homes throughout Kansas. This includes nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, home plus facilities, long-term care units (LTCU), residential care facilities and adult daycares. We are a state agency specifically designed to provide advocacy assistance to LTC residents.

Every year the State LTC Ombudsman Office investigates and works to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents of long-term care facilities. Each year we continue to handle more complaints of financial exploitation through fraudulent use of powers of attorney, durable power of attorney, guardianship, conservatorships and trusts. Our largest number of complaints each year continues to be for involuntary discharges, prompted frequently by non-payment as a result of this exploitation.

We are asking for your support of SB 19, which would protect residents:

➢ Financial Abuse Neglect and Exploitation

➢ Mental anguish and trauma occurring after such incidents

➢ Issues of possible discharge due non-payment

Advocating for resident rights and protections of health and property is paramount to the LTC ombudsman program. SB 19 offers a pathway in dealing with the growing number of fiduciary abuse which is a serious matter to residents residing in adult care homes throughout Kansas. The ombudsman program strongly encourages the committee to champion SB 19.

I encourage any comments or questions the committee might have for me.