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To: Co-Chair Valderrama, Co-Chair Campos, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
From: Bridget Budbill, Legislative Advocate at the Oregon Law Center
Re: House Bill 5020 – Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman budget
Date: March 4, 2025

Dear Co-Chair Valderrama, Co-Chair Campos, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services,

The Oregon Law Center (OLC) is a legal aid organization providing free, civil legal services to low-income Oregonians, including residents of long-term care communities who receive Medicaid. We write in support of House Bill 5020, funding for Oregon’s Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO).

The LTCO is an independent resource for thousands of Oregonians who need help navigating the residential care system, which is complex even for people who work in this system, daily. The LTCO has leveraged a relatively small staff and a legion of dedicated, deeply knowledgeable volunteers to provide help and information for care facility residents all across our state. LTCO also serves as an important information hub for organizations that advocate for residents in long-term care communities, including OLC. We especially appreciate the LTCO’s attention to ensuring fairness, transparency, and understanding when evictions from care facilities arise. These events are particularly stressful and sometimes dangerous for low-income Oregonians who need long-term care settings for their health and safety, have few or no personal resources to fall back on when facing eviction, and for whom finding alternative placement settings can be very challenging.

We also support the LTCO’s POP 101, making permanent five limited duration positions in the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG). Many Oregonians lack family or community ties to rely upon when they need help making critical life decisions. Staff from the OPG step into this role and help ensure that fewer Oregonians without other support networks are alone when major decisions are on the table.

Low-income Oregonians needing long-term care and public guardianship services greatly benefit from the work of the LTCO; we urge your support for fully funding HB 5020. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bridget Budbill

The Oregon Law Center’s mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.